



# **CULBERTSON POINT-COUNT BIDDING**

**IMPROVED AND SIMPLIFIED 4-3-2-1  
WITH THE NEW RULE OF 3 & 4**

**BY**

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**THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY**  
*Philadelphia • Toronto*

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FIRST EDITION

MADE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

L. C. Card # 52-10710

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# Introduction

BY ALBERT MOREHEAD

## Some Facts for the Record

**NOTE.** Mr. Morehead is the outstanding authority on the history of contract bridge and other games. He is a former chairman and president of the American Contract Bridge League, bridge editor of *The New York Times*, and author of many books. As such he is eminently qualified to tell how the Culbertson System came about and what are the fundamental bids in contract bridge.

THE PUBLISHERS

Almost from the day that it became the favorite card game of millions throughout the world, contract bridge has been synonymous with the name Culbertson. In some countries the game is simply called Culbertson. It is ironical to note that though so much of Ely Culbertson's recent efforts has been to create a system of international government, the most truly international of all laws is a different Culbertson law—the one applying to the bidding of bridge hands.

Only a handful of the millions of bridge players have any idea of the extent to which they are following "Culbertson law" each time they play bridge—even when they think they are playing some other system. The younger players take for granted, as though they were axioms that have always existed, certain bidding principles that were unknown before Culbertson first expressed them, in some cases almost thirty years ago. There are older players who were around when Culbertson (then considered a dangerous radical in the game) produced his first innovations back in 1923, but most of them have forgotten. It is all but incredible to most players, even experts, that the following were unknown or unhonored in the pre-Culbertson era:

**The Bidding of Four-Card Suits.** Introduced by Culbertson in 1923. Up to that time the minimum biddable suit had five cards and conservatives required that even a five-card suit contain at least one quick trick. Wilbur Whitehead, one of the great auction bridge authorities, wrote in the '20s: "The introduction by Ely Culbertson of four-card suit bids is the greatest development of modern bridge."

**The Approach Principle.** This has become so much a part of the game that it no longer occurs to anyone that the "principle" requires a name at all. Yet before Culbertson, the "cheaper" notrump was the

undisputed king, and countless games were lost through lack of any effort to find a trump fit.

**The Principle of Economy of Bids.** It was Culbertson who first taught that the bidding should be kept low at the start. Previously, believe it or not, the object had been to keep the bidding high so that the opponents could not overcall. What Culbertson actually taught bridge players, including the experts, was that the first object of bidding is to double the opponents and collect penalties; that the side with the preponderant strength can afford to keep the bidding low; and that by keeping the bidding low, this side will either reach its own best contract or can double the opponents if they step out. Self-evident, you may say; but the fact remains that no one thought so in those days.

**The Forcing Principle.** This, like several of the other Culbertson discoveries, seems like something everyone has always known, but it was originated and developed by Culbertson in California in 1927-1928, when it first became apparent that contract bridge would replace auction. It remains the dominant principle of contract bridge and it would be hard to conceive today of a system in which there are no forcing bids. From the forcing principle Culbertson derived scores of new methods including the opening two-bid, forcing jump bids, the overcall-in-the-opponents'-suit-bid, cue-bids, and the many inferential forces that are now standard.

**The Effect of Distribution on Bids.** This is the least known, yet perhaps the most valuable, of Culbertson's contributions. Referring to Culbertson's discovery R. F. Foster observed, in *Modern Bridge Tactics* (1924): "This matter of distribution has never been touched upon in any of the textbooks on auction, but I believe it will be the key to most of the bidding tactics of the future." Twenty-eight years after the fact, it seems incredible that the effect of distribution on bids was unrecognized until one man came along and told the world about it. Yet such is the fact, and for a number of years Culbertson's was a voice crying in the wilderness. As late as 1927, there were still experts who considered him a crackpot because he would bid more on a 4-4-3-2 than on a 4-3-3-3, more on a 5-4-3-1 than on a 5-3-3-2. Milton Work, the senior prophet of auction bridge, wrote, "Bridge is a game of aces and kings."

**The Honor-Trick Table.** Of course, bridge was not then a game of Aces and Kings, but it was Culbertson who introduced the honor-trick table that was more flexible and gave quick-trick importance to un-

supported lower honors, as Queens, Jacks and tens; who first pointed out the fact that there are a limited number of honor-tricks and by the "rule of eight" one can determine which side has the balance of power. Previously, even expert players had been guilty of such bidding absurdities as this:

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1 notrump	Double	Pass	2 notrump

—it never occurring to East that if he could make two notrump, the penalty would be more valuable than the part-score, and that if he could make three notrump, the penalty would be more valuable than the game.

**The Distributional Count.** Culbertson's theories of distribution and balance of power led logically to the development of a method of counting actual winners at a given contract, which his wife, Josephine Culbertson, codified as the Distributional Count—still the most accurate way of valuing one's hand. This method, incidentally, later became the basis of the 4-3-2-1 point-count used by Charles Goren.

**The 4-5 Notrump Slam Bids.** Culbertson first had the idea of using the 4-5 notrump level to show Aces wholesale. He published it in 1933. The first manuscript in which Easley Blackwood set forth his own theories presented them as "a development based on Culbertson's new idea." I know, because Blackwood sent that manuscript to me in 1934 for publication in *The Bridge World*.

**The One-Over-One.** Culbertson did not name this; Theodore Lightner did. But Culbertson thought of it first. In the magazine article, published in 1928, in which he first introduced the principle of the forcing bid, Culbertson gave a list of typical forcing situations—and look what led the list: "One partner opens with a suit-bid of one, and the other partner responds with a suit-bid of one." Yet within four years others were claiming the one-over-one as a bidding system of their own different from Culbertson's!

The list could be continued indefinitely. It would also include some impractical bids, proposed and soon abandoned; some good bids (like the asking bids) that were technically successful but psychologically unacceptable to the mass of bridge players; and a host of bidding methods that were inescapable consequences of the basic principles, and that anybody might have thought of—given Culbertson's fundamental principles and specifics as a starting point. The fact remains that

contract bridge today would be impossible without the theories and practical methods discovered and developed by Ely Culbertson.

I have written the foregoing because I think there has been of late too much tendency to overlook Culbertson's contributions, and to give other names to systems that are anywhere from 75% to 90% the Culbertson System. But two facts must be made clear: Ely Culbertson is not the only man who has made important contributions to contract bridge as it is played today; and his genius did not create the Culbertson System all by itself.

Who created the Culbertson System? As with most dynamic concepts, it is the joint creation of a single mind and of a collective mind. The System embodies the traditions and accumulated experience of whole generations of card players. In the course of its development, all the best minds of contract bridge contributed to it—those who were friendly or associated with Culbertson and worked with him, and also those who were unfriendly and trying to produce superior systems of their own. Theirs was the collective mind. The single mind was Culbertson's, and was essential. It is still essential. A committee cannot write a poem or compose a symphony—or create a system. Some dominant individual must be present to create, prod, suggest, and integrate. No one who was around at the time can doubt that in the case of contract bridge science, that individual was Culbertson.

The talent for organization is a rare one and an indefinable one. I am not sure just why Culbertson has it (though surely I know him as well as anyone does); I know only that he has it. Bertrand Russell, the Nobel Prize winner, recently wrote about him: "The most remarkable man I ever knew—and I do not play bridge." Somehow, Culbertson not only introduced a system but also organized another system to keep it in a continuous stage of growth and improvement.

There is an unfortunate tendency of American bridge writers to overlook the preponderant portion of their systems that is pure Culbertson, or at least to give no credit to the original authors of the Culbertson System. In some cases they even convey an impression that the use of a point-count involves the abandonment of the Culbertson System.

A proper ethical code in any field of endeavor requires that due credit be given to anyone whose original ideas are used, borrowed, or extended. This is not a legal matter, for ideas cannot be copyrighted (and it is proper that they should not be; ideas should be the property of all). Hence, acknowledgment of the contribution of others is a debt

of honor. In the case of bridge, it is elementary fair play to Culbertson and his lifework, to which he has devoted more than thirty years, and to the many others—writers, players, and teachers—who have been associated with him from time to time during that period. Yet in one of the point-count books—the one by Charles Solomon and Bennett Disbrow—I find credit to Culbertson only for devising the 4-5 notrump convention. In the books on point-count bidding by Charles Goren I find no mention of Culbertson's name, though Goren has not made any material change in his bidding methods since the days when his books were frankly written about the Culbertson System. True, Goren did credit Culbertson in his earlier books, and absence of credit in the Solomon-Disbrow and other books is, I feel sure, unintentional. Nevertheless, the beginning bridge player of today might pardonably get the idea that the authors of these books had originated and perfected a beautiful and harmonious system of contract-bridge bids and responses, and that somewhere along the line a little guy named Ely Culbertson had helped out by proposing bids of four and five notrump to help in reaching slams.

To repeat, the Culbertson System is not the property of Ely Culbertson or any other individual. The authors of other bridge books have every right to write about it. It belongs to the players of the world. But the players themselves, millions of them, give credit to the man primarily responsible for it, Ely Culbertson. In introducing this latest book of his, I also wanted to make sure that this credit goes to the man to whom it is due.

ALBERT MOREHEAD



# Author's Foreword

## The Story of the Point-Count

The point-count is older than auction or contract bridge. It was used first in whist by Dr. William Pole to determine, statistically, the relative trick-taking value of high cards. In auction and contract bridge the point-count was known as a notrump count, since it was used only for valuation at notrump bids where it possesses a high degree of accuracy.

In the Culbertson System the 4-3-2-1 notrump count, borrowed by Bryant McCampbell from Pitch and popularized by Milton Work, has been recommended since 1930 as an optional method to honor-trick valuation. Thousands of players have used it ever since and are still using it in conjunction with the honor-trick table for suit-bids. I wrote in the 1930 edition of *Contract Bridge Blue Book*: "A comparison will show that the 4-3-2-1 point-count as advocated by Mr. Work, or other similar point-counts, are for all practical purposes identical with the notrump valuation based on the Culbertson honor-trick count. The type of mind that thinks in figures will perhaps be happier with a point-count."

Milton Work attempted to adapt the 4-3-2-1 count to trump bids. He gave up, announcing that the count was not suitable for suit-bids. At the time he was right and for years I also opposed it as unsound. Recent developments opened the door to the application of the point-count to trump bids as well. Various methods arose, most of them rigid and highly complex (unnecessarily so, as I found out later), but moving in the right direction. The most popular of them derived from the Culbertson valuation of distributional values.

## Will a Point-Count Method Replace the Honor-Trick Method?

There has been, and is, no thought of abandoning the honor-trick method of valuation in favor of some point-count. The honor-trick method is basic and inherent to contract bridge. Bidding is mental play. Bidding is a *prediction* (or a bet) that a number of tricks, as contracted for in the bid, will be made in the play. The honor-trick method derives from the direct count of winning (and losing) tricks in the bidder's hand—a method used, consciously or unconsciously, by

virtually all expert players and which always will be used by the majority of players. It may be called a *natural* count. An Ace is valued as one trick in bidding, for the inescapable reason that it will win one trick in play.

This does not mean that a different method, based on a point-count valuation, cannot produce excellent results. There is room in the Culbertson System for both languages—the concrete language of tricks and the abstract language of points.

It seems to some innocent point-count enthusiasts (and to some not-so-innocent writers) that the use of a point-count involves the abandonment of the Culbertson System. Nothing could be further from the truth. The point-count is another method of valuation leading to the *same* bids on the *same* hands.

Charles H. Goren, for example, writes, "Let me make it clear that the point count is not a System. It is an approach; a simplified method for valuing one's hand. So you are not to feel that a new System is being foisted upon you."\* Mr. Goren, for a number of years a successful teacher of the Culbertson System, elsewhere writes: "The point-count valuation for suit bidding, as I have developed it, is almost a literal translation of the playing-trick table, with a few minor improvements."† The playing-trick table to which Mr. Goren refers is the table of the Culbertson Distributional Count.

## The Babel of Point-Count Methods

Until today there has existed no standard point-count method of valuation. Instead, there are five entirely different types; and the 4-3-2-1 type, which is the most popular, has more than twenty different "varieties." The number of these "methods" is still growing, and with it grows the confusion and bewilderment of the players, who do not know who is right and which way to turn. The five basic types of point-counts and all the twenty-odd varieties of the 4-3-2-1 count seem to be agreed on one thing only: protected by the anonymity of the point-count, they preach and practice the Culbertson System in pointed disguise.

It is clear that there is a need for a new, improved method of point-count, preferably based on the popular and best-known 4-3-2-1 count. The new count, in order to become standard, would have to be simpler

\* *Point-Count Bidding in Contract Bridge* (Revised Edition).

† *Bridge World*, January 1950.

and more accurate than the preceding counts, particularly in suit-bids; and it must be designed from the standpoint of expert rubber bridge, while being adaptable to duplicate bridge.

Late in 1949, my associates and I began research to develop an improved 4-3-2-1 count. This book is the result of that research. We believe it fits the exacting specifications. We had the great advantage of coming into the field after all others and thus avoiding their errors, while profiting by their sound ideas. But much more than that was needed if we were to develop a point-count for suit-bids that would not collapse from the weight of its own complexities. The 4-3-2-1 count is at its best in notrump bidding; not much need be done to improve it there. But an opening notrump is a relatively rare bid. It is in the 4-3-2-1 count valuation for suit-bids and, particularly, the point valuation of distributional values (points for length and ruffing tricks) that the greatest improvement has been made by us.

From the standpoint of simplicity, the outstanding feature of the new Culbertson 4-3-2-1 count is the Culbertson Rule of 3 & 4—the third and fourth card. This revolutionary formula does away entirely with the drudgery of counting points for doubletons, singletons or voids in *either* the RAISER'S or DECLARER'S hand. It also reduces the laborious point-count for suit lengths to a simple, automatic operation. At the same time, the 3 & 4 formula is considerably more accurate than any other method so far proposed.

I must warn the reader that these improvements, substantial as they are, will not do away with all complications. They are inherent in any point-count method of valuation. The claim made by some authors that *their* method of point valuation for suit-bids is more simple and more accurate than the *natural* valuation based on playing tricks is not true. You can have a simple but inaccurate point valuation; or you can have an accurate but complicated point valuation. You cannot have both.

### On the Rapid Count of Points

In our continued quest for simplicity we turned our attention to one defect inherent in all point-counts: the sheer labor of arithmetic in adding up all those fours and threes and twos and ones after each deal.

I pity the good lady who, knowing only the finger method, finds herself with Aces and Kings galore—more points than the ten fingers on her hands. After that, she must either stop bidding or take off her shoes.

We have devised a special method for the rapid count of the 4-3-2-1 points in the hand, described in Chapter 5. It is to be hoped that, armed with this rapid count technique, the good lady will no longer need to take off her shoes.

Another difficulty inherent in the point-count method is to remember the formidable number of minimum-maximum requirements in points for various bids. We were baffled. The pages of point requirement demand the memory of a specialized robot. I, for one, could not remember them all, and am forced to *reconstruct* a particular requirement from the few basically logic assumptions. This was our clue to further simplification. Whenever possible, we tried to describe the simple processes behind the requirement, so that the reader may be able, himself, to reconstruct the requirements in points for various bids.

It is entirely possible for one player to use honor-trick valuation while his partner is using the point-count. In order to facilitate partnership (and opponents') understanding, we state many requirements in terms of both valuation methods.

The great weakness of many point-count players is their tendency to neglect the tactics of the penalty double. They are so intent on combining their hands for the best game bid that they forget that the biggest point-maker in bridge is a penalty double. To some extent, this defect is inherent in the structure of the point-count, where a concept of precise defensive valuation (defensive honor-tricks) is absent. To remedy this defect, at least in part, we have developed a special chapter on penalty doubles, a special rule based on the point-count.

In the rest of the book, we have tried to answer questions on the 4-3-2-1 point-count that were not previously answered or not answered satisfactorily. We devoted many pages to advanced valuation from the standpoint of expert bidding, both in rubber and duplicate bridge. We sought to achieve a greater simplicity than heretofore, and yet a greater accuracy.

The point-count has come of age. It is very well suited to certain types of players and to certain types of bids. If a player wishes to use point-count he will find in this book a careful, reliable guide. He will also find that he is in no way departing from the Culbertson System—and the latest methods of contract bridge.

ELY CULBERTSON



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To: Josephine Culbertson, the greatest teacher and twice international champion player, who contributed so much to the basic theories of the Culbertson System.

Theodore A. Lightner, whose contributions to the Culbertson System have extended from its earliest days right up to the present day. Particularly in this book his original ideas viewed from the standpoint of a famous expert and help in the advanced analysis of the 4-3-2-1 count have been of utmost importance.

Alphonse Moyse, Jr., my advisor and colleague for many years, and who has done such an outstanding job with *The Bridge World Magazine*, which he now publishes.

Albert H. Morehead, also an outstanding analyst, who also, over the course of many years, has made major contributions to the Culbertson System, and who, together with Josephine Culbertson, has edited most of my books.

Waldemar von Zedtwitz, whose original ideas, so many of which were incorporated into the Culbertson System, included the famous "bust" two-notrump response to the opening two-bid; Richard L. Frey, Oswald Jacoby, Myron Field, George Bard, Hy Lavinthal and others too numerous to mention who also made valuable contributions.

In a real sense, all great players, here and abroad, are in part creators of the Culbertson System.

I am also obligated, for this book, to the members of my immediate staff and particularly to my executive secretary, Diana Myers.



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# Book I

## Point-Count Valuation and the Basic Requirements for Bids

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## CHAPTER 1

# How to Understand and Use the Point-Count

In the Culbertson Point-Count method we use the 4-3-2-1 count for valuation of high cards. This count has been chosen because it is relatively the most simple and much the best known. The practical application of this count has been improved and simplified for high cards. For the valuation of low cards (distributional values) a new method for the distributional points is used.

### THE HIGH-CARD POINT-COUNT (The 4-3-2-1 Count)

Ace	= 4 points
King	= 3 points
Queen	= 2 points
Jack	= 1 point

The pack contains 40 points in high cards.

An average hand is worth 10 points in high cards.

The words high cards as used here apply to the four top honors only.

### THE CORRECTION POINTS

Add 1 point for all four Aces in the hand.

Deduct 1 point for a singleton King or Queen-Jack alone in a plain suit, i.e., any suit that is neither partner's nor own trump bid.

The foregoing correction points apply to both trump and no-trump valuation. Correction points in trump bids will be detailed on the following pages.

## The New Rule of Three and Four

### (For Distributional Points)

The High-Card Point-Count Table applies to both trump and no-trump bids. *However:* At opening notrump bids, only the high-card point-count table is used. At all trump bids, *in addition to the 4-3-2-1 count*, a new method—The Rule of Three and Four—is used for valuation of low cards in the long suits and ruffers (distributional values). The distributional points, when added to the point value of high cards, give the exact point-count of a hand at any trump bid by the partnership.

In the new Culbertson Point-Count method for distributional values, the separate count of short suits is entirely eliminated in declarer's and responding hands. It is automatically (and mathematically) included in the new Rule of Three and Four. This is a point-count based on variations in suit-lengths—a rule which is not only remarkably simple but, in precision, rivals the Distributional Count for playing-tricks.

### THE LOW-CARD POINT-COUNT FOR OPENING TRUMP BIDS

In addition to the points for high cards:

Ace	= 4
King	= 3
Queen	= 2
Jack	= 1

Count long suits as follows:

Each trump over <i>four</i>	= 1
Each card over <i>three</i> in each side suit	= 1

### CORRECTION POINTS

At all bids, notrump or trump:

Add 1 point for all four Aces in the hand.

Deduct 1 point for King or Q-J alone in any nontrump suit.

In addition, for opening trump bids:

Deduct 1 point if hand contains no Ace.

## Basic Requirements for Bids

Most bridge hands, if opened at all, are opened with a bid of one in a suit or notrump. These are the point-count requirements for opening bids of one:

### OPENING ONE-NOTRUMP BIDS

The requirements for an opening bid of one notrump, in any position, and whether or not vulnerable, are:

16-18 points in high cards (never more or less) counting Ace 4, King 3, Queen 2, Jack 1.

Balanced distribution, preferably 4-3-3-3. A 4-4-3-2 distribution is almost as good. A 5-3-3-2 hand may be bid if the five-card suit is a minor. In special cases, one notrump is bid on a 6-3-2-2 hand.

At least three suits must be stopped (Ace, K-x, Q-x-x, or J-x-x-x). If the hand contains a doubleton, it must be no weaker than Q-x.

Minimum opening one-notrump bid (16 points):

♠ A 7 2    ♥ A Q 4    ♦ J 5 3 2    ♣ K Q 6  
 Points:    4    +    4 + 2 +    1    +    3 + 2

Maximum opening one-notrump bid (18 points):

♠ A 4 3 2    ♥ A K 6    ♦ Q J 5    ♣ A 4 3  
 Points:    4    +    4 + 3 +    2 + 1 +    4

### OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE

An opening suit-bid of one usually requires a biddable suit (covered on page 80) and a combined high-card and distributional point-count as follows:

14 or more points—must be opened.

13 points—usually open the bidding.

Exception: a bare 13-point hand with no good rebid.

12 points—open the bidding in a good five-card or longer suit.

Weaker hands may exceptionally be opened—see page 22.

### WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE GAME

Partnership bidding is based on the *Game and Slam Expectancies* described in the following pages. Briefly, the expectancies are:

20 to 24 points in the combined hands will usually produce a part-score but seldom a game.

- 26 points in the combined hands will usually produce a good play for game at notrump or in a major suit. 25 points will often produce a notrump game, and more often a game in a strong major suit.
- 29 points will usually produce a game in a minor suit.
- 33 points will usually produce a favorable play for a small slam.
- 37 points will usually produce a favorable play for a grand slam.

These slam, game and no-game expectancies are explained fully on the following pages.

### Game and Slam Expectancies

You can measure the strength and weakness of your own and your partner's hands by adding the high-card points shown by partner's bids to your own points. To do this, there are a few basic figures that you should understand and remember.

### The Basic Number 40

Each of the four suits is worth 10 points in high cards. A pack of 52 cards contains 40 points.

This basic number 40 serves as a fairly reliable guide for determining the game or slam capacity of partnership hands. For instance, if partnership bidding discloses a count of 34 high-card points at notrump, the opposition, as a rule, cannot hold more than 6 points. With only an Ace and a Queen outstanding, the partnership usually has a good small slam bid.

The total count of 40 is a reliable guide only at opening notrump bids.

At opening notrump bids only the 4-3-2-1 count is used. Consequently, the total of 40 remains constant. In all other bidding situations (and that includes *responding* with notrump bids) extra points for suit lengths and ruffes are added to the 4-3-2-1 count. The total of the pack will, therefore, be in excess of 40 and will vary considerably with each deal.

Theoretically, in trump bids a pack may contain as high as 80 points. You may then commit the disastrous error of bidding a "sure" grand slam with a count of 38 points only to discover that opponents show up with a couple of Aces.

It is true that, in practice, the variations of the point-count at suit-bids occur usually within the limits of between 40 and 50. The fact remains

that even when the point-count indicates that you are in a slam zone, it will still be necessary to determine (by other methods) at least the first-round controls, i.e., the possession of Aces or voids in combined hands (see Slam Bidding, page 141).

### The Average Hand in High-Card Points

The 40 points of the pack divided into four hands give you 10 points as an average for each hand. (In honor-trick value 10 points of the average hand equal  $2 +$  honor-tricks.)

Here is the perfect average hand:

♠ A 9 7 5	(4)
♥ K 8 6	(3)
♦ Q 3 2	(2)
♣ J 10 4	(1)

#### 10 Points

Like all perfect things, this perfect average is rare. Other 10-point hands and other hand-patterns occur much more often. The important thing is that the concept of 10 points for the average hand serves as a starting line from which the point requirements for n-game, game and slams can be determined accurately and easily remembered. This is how you can reason it out:

The average of two combined hands is 20 points, half of the pack's high cards. This means that the partners should make seven tricks (one-odd) or go down one. Inasmuch as the declarer has at least a one-trick advantage when playing at the best suit-bid, the combined hands rating 20 high-card points will average to make one-odd.\*

### The Point Valuation of Combined Hands

In each deal a player obtains the total point value of his hand by adding up his high-card and distributional points. From information

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\* Some writers superficially conclude that 1 trick equals 3 points, plus a fraction (40 divided by 13). This is a fallacy for two reasons: At suit-bids most of the value of Queens and Jacks is lost; at the same time the distributional points rapidly increase in value in proportion to the length (or shortness) of suits and, in many cases, 1 distributional point becomes equal to 1 trick. Also, defensively, nothing similar to the Rule of 8 is possible with any point-count.

conveyed through partner's bids (or pass) a player obtains the point value of partner's hand. By adding the point values of the combined hands, both partners will know fairly accurately when to stop short of game, and when to try for a slam. This knowledge is greatly facilitated by the following table of probable expectancies for no-game, game and slam bids in two combined hands. It is scientifically exact and it will save many hours of drudgery in remembering the point-count requirements for various bids.

In the following table, the number of expected tricks is given for suit-bids. For notrump bids subtract one point from the number of expected tricks given. For instance, 24 points = 9 tricks at a suit bid; at notrump 24 points = 9 - 1 or 8 tricks.

### Point-Count Table of Expectancies (In Combined Hands)

High and Low Card Points*	Expected Tricks	Comment
<b>20</b>	7	<i>Part-score zone.</i> The best hope with hands of this type is maneuvering for penalties.
22	8	<i>Same.</i>
24	9	<i>Still a part-score zone.</i> However, a game in major suits is not rare with a good fit in the trump suit and unbalanced hand-patterns. Good players keep a sharp lookout for game.
25	9-10	<i>Borderline game zone.</i> In rubber bridge, bid game in spades, hearts or notrump if the hand contains a good long suit or a fit with unbalanced distributions.
<b>26</b>	10	<i>Game.</i> Should be bid in spades, hearts or notrump. 26 is a basic number, serving as a definite line of demarcation between game and no-game expectancies. Most of the point requirements for bids are built around this num-

\* It is not possible to give a mathematically precise equivalent between *defensive* honor-tricks and a point-count. However, a fair approximation can be obtained by counting  $4\frac{1}{2}$  points as equal to one honor-trick. 9 points = 2 honor-tricks; 18 points = 4 honor-tricks;  $22\frac{1}{2}$  points = 5 honor-tricks; 27 points = 6 honor-tricks;  $31\frac{1}{2}$  points = 7 honor-tricks; 36 points = 8 honor-tricks.

High and Low Card Points	Expected Tricks	Comment
		ber 26; and from this number starts the climb toward slam bids. The combined hands will make game at your best bid in the good majority of cases. However, failure to make game is not rare.
27-28	10-11	<i>Assured Game</i> —at a best bid in major suits or notrump. As a rule, make a forcing bid, or jump to game in the best available suit or in notrump. The exceptions to game are sterile distribution (4-3-3-3 in both hands) or misfits.
29	11	<i>Good chance for game</i> —at a best bid in diamonds or clubs. However, prefer a notrump bid to minor-suit bids for game.
30-31	11	<i>Assured game</i> —at a best bid in diamonds or clubs. Prefer a diamond or club bid to notrump, except in duplicate bridge.
32	11-12	<i>Borderline small slam zone.</i> Opponents will hold at least 8 points, an equivalent of two Aces or an Ace, a King and a Jack. Small slam should be investigated to insure first-round controls, i.e., Aces and voids in partnership hands. If controls are available, a slam should be bid, provided the trump suit is strong and a good side length is available. A small slam also should be bid on freak hands with a strong trump suit. Avoid slams or slam tries at notrump.
33	12	<i>Small slam zone.</i> A small slam will be made about two-thirds of the time. A slam should be bid at the best trump bid in a major or minor suit. To avoid the duplication of high-card points with distributional points it is preferable to investigate the first-round controls. With rare exceptions, a small slam bid at notrump should be avoided in rubber bridge.
34-35	12-13	<i>A small slam is virtually assured.</i> It will be made at least four out of five times at the best



High and Low Card Points	Expected Tricks	Comment
		trump bid. In duplicate bridge prefer notrump to trump bids with 35 points.
36	13	<i>A borderline grand slam.</i> Investigate first- and second-round controls.
<b>37</b>	13	<i>Grand slam zone.</i> A grand slam should be bid if the partnership controls the first round in every suit and if the trump suit and side suits can count up to 13 winners.
38	13	<i>A grand slam is almost assured at notrump,</i> where only high cards are usually counted. Outstanding, there could only be a Queen or two Jacks. One rare exception to the grand slam expectancy is when both partnership hands are distributed 4-3-3-3; or when there is duplication of high-card values, as when one partner holds a doubleton A-K and the other partner a doubleton Q-J. Whether at notrump or suit grand slams, it pays to investigate the first-round controls—see Chapter 15.

To summarize: There are four basic expectancies that must be remembered for the partnership hands. They are, the figures 20, 26, 33 and 37. From 20 to 24, we are in the part-score zone. 25 points belong both to the game and part-score zone. From 26 to 29, we are in a game zone in major suits and notrump. From 29 to 31, we are in a “five-odd” zone, game in diamonds or clubs. 32 points belong both to the small slam and five-odd zones. With 33 to 36 points we are in the small slam zone. Finally, with 37 points we climb to the top of the bids—the grand slam.

## Outline of Culbertson Point-Count Valuation

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### HIGH CARD POINT-COUNT FOR NOTRUMP BIDS

Ace	= 4
King	= 3
Queen	= 2
Jack	= 1

#### CORRECTION POINTS: *Add      Subtract*

4 Aces .....	1	
Singleton King .....		1
Q J alone .....		1

### WHEN RAISING NOTRUMP BIDS

Use above table and: Add 1 point for five-card suit headed by K or Q-10 or better. DO NOT subtract for King or Q-J alone.

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### OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE

#### I.

Ace	= 4
King	= 3
Queen	= 2
Jack	= 1

#### CORRECTION POINTS:

	<i>Add</i>	<i>Subtract</i>
4 Aces .....	1	
Singleton King .....		1
Q-J alone .....		1

#### II.

### THE RULE OF 3 & 4

(Point-Count of Length Values)

#### IN THE TRUMP SUIT

#### IN ALL SIDE SUITS

For Each Card over FOUR	For Each Card over THREE
add 1	add 1

*See also Finer Points, Chapter 4*

## RAISES OF OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE

## I.

Count High Cards according to the Table for Opening No-trump Bids, WITHOUT the Correction Points.

## II.

## THE RULE OF 3 &amp; 4

In ALL Suits, for Each Card Over THREE add 1

## CORRECTION POINTS:

	<i>Add</i>	<i>Subtract</i>
For 6 or more trumps.....	2	
For void or 2 singletons.....	1	
Holding 3 trumps only.....		1
Holding 4-3-3-3 distribution .....		1

## DECLARER'S REVALUATION

## (When Partner Has Raised)

To your original count,	<i>Add</i>
For the 4th trump (not counted before).....	1
(But do not add for a 4-card trump suit unless partner has raised twice.)	
For having 6 or more trumps.....	2

CULBERTSON RULE OF 24  
FOR OPENING TWO-BIDS AND RESPONSES

1. Count all high cards by the 4-3-2-1 count—without correction points; except: count only 2 points for a King and 1 for a Queen if you don't have another high card in the suit.
  2. 100 Honors (in any suit or suits) 1 pt.  
150 Honors (in any suit or suits) 2 pts.
  3. Each card over four (in every suit) 2 pts.
- If the total count of your hand is 24 points or more you have a TWO-BID

*See also Finer Points, Chapter 4*

## CHAPTER 2

# Culbertson Point Valuation of Notrump Bids\*

Point valuation of notrump bids is quite simple. As a rule, only the count of high cards (4-3-2-1) is used when computing the value of your hand as *declarer* at notrump.

For instance,

♠ Q J 7	3
♥ K 9	3
♦ A Q 8 7 5	6
♣ K Q 3	5
	<hr/>
	17

For opening notrump bids, do not count five-card or longer suits. However, an 18-point hand with a strong five-card suit such as A-K-Q-x-x is usually too strong for one notrump and is better opened with one in the suit.

**In revaluation of the opening notrump hand:** An extra point credit should be taken if opener's hand contains a five-card suit and partner raises in notrump. The assumption is, if partner raises in notrump he must have a balanced hand, probably 4-3-3-3, and therefore the suit is quickly establishable. If on the hand above one notrump is bid and partner raises to two notrump, the opener adds 1 point for his diamond length, bringing his count up to 18.

**For notrump takeouts:** If a notrump bid is made by the responding hand (responding to partner's opening suit-bid of one) the normal response is with 6 points. This requirement may, however, be shaded to 5 points, if your hand contains a ten combined with a higher honor, or in a suit such as 10-9-x-x, as in the following hand:

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\* For details and advanced treatment of notrump bidding see Chapter 7.

♠ Q 10 4 (2)    ♥ 8 7    ♦ K 10 8 4 3 (3)    ♣ 7 5 2

**For raises of partner's opening notrump bid:** The raising hand adds 1 point for a five-card suit headed by King, or Q-10, or better.

♠ Q 7 6

♥ 5 2

♦ K Q 6 4 2

♣ 5 4 3

Count 8 points, including 1 for the diamond length.

The 4-3-2-1 count is quite accurate for straight notrump play: that is, the valuation 4-3-2-1 corresponds closely to the actual value of the honors; the Queens and Jacks, no longer inhibited by the formidable trump barrier, develop freely. Consequently, no other point corrections are necessary. The requirements and technique of notrump bidding are fully treated in Chapters 7 and 8. Here, I will give only a summary of expectancies and requirements which are necessary to understand or to use point-count valuation in notrump bidding.

### Expectancies in Combined Hands

26 points give partnership a profitable play for game.

33 points give partnership a profitable play for a small slam.

37 points give partnership a profitable play for a grand slam.

### Point Requirements for Opening One-Notrump Bids

An opening notrump bid of one is a strong bid. Whereas an opening suit-bid of one is made on as little as 13 points, or a King above the average hand, the opening notrump bid of one contains from two Kings to two Aces above the average (60 to 80%).

In any position, vulnerable or not vulnerable, open with one notrump if you hold:

1. 16-18 points in high cards.

2. A balanced distribution; that is,

4-3-3-3 (the basic notrump distribution).

4-4-3-2 (except when both four-card lengths are biddable major suits).

5-3-3-2 (with a strong five-card minor suit).

6-3-2-2 (exceptionally, and only with a strong six-card minor suit).

3. Stoppers in at least three suits; if there is a doubleton in the hand it should be at least as good as Q-x.

### Responses to One-Notrump Openings

Raises (on balanced distribution):

- 7 points or less—pass
- 8 or 9 points—raise to two notrump
- 10 to 14 points—raise to three notrump
- 15 points or more—make a slam try (see Chapter 15)

Suit Takeouts (on unbalanced distribution or long suits):

- 7 points or less—usually pass
- 8 to 12 points—bid two in a suit
- More than 12 points—usually make a forcing (jump) takeout (see page 63)

The rigid requirements in high cards and hand-patterns (hand distributions) are typical of notrump bidding. An opening notrump is a *limit* bid containing 16-18 points, no more and no less. A limit bid is one that has a floor and a ceiling, i.e., a minimum-maximum requirement (in points or honor-tricks). As a result, the responding hand can judge exactly the minimum-maximum limits of combined hands and adjust its responses accordingly. For instance, if your partner bids one notrump and you hold 8 points, you will reason that if he has a minimum then your combined hands will not produce game, since his 16 points plus your own 8 points equal 24 points, 2 points short of game expectancy. On the other hand, if he has a maximum, 18 points, then there is a game. Accordingly, you raise your partner's opening notrump bid to two notrump (provided your hand does not contain a five-card or longer major suit and unbalanced distribution).

Again, if your hand counts up to 10 points, say 9 points in high cards and 1 point for a five-card length, you know that with 26 points you are in the game zone even if your partner's opening notrump bid is a minimum of 16 points; and should your hand count up to 15 points, preferably all in high cards, you start looking for a slam, since your 15 points plus his possible maximum of 18 points will give you a small slam.

## An Alternative Theory of Notrump Bidding

The requirements for opening notrumps and responses in the preceding pages are based on the theory of strong notrumps introduced by this writer in 1934. The strong notrump theory is now an integral part of all systems of contract bridge whether they be based on honor-trick valuation or on a point-count. There is, however, an alternative theory of *light* notrumps, introduced by this writer in 1928, which is still used by a number of experts.

Both theories are based on the concept of balanced hand distributions (particularly 4-3-3-3). The difference between them is that in the strong notrump method no distinction is made between vulnerable and not vulnerable; while in the light notrump method the requirements for opening one-notrump bids differ according to whether the side is vulnerable or not vulnerable.

No expert player indulges in a light notrump when vulnerable, except against weak opponents. The danger is that a light opening one-notrump bid when vulnerable might easily result in a disastrous loss when doubled by the opponents for business. This objection does not apply nearly so much, if at all, to light opening one-notrump bids when not vulnerable. Hence the point-count limits in the light notrump bids are:

**For a non-vulnerable one notrump, 13-15 points.**

**For a vulnerable one notrump, 16-18 points.**

The requirements for balanced distribution given for the strong notrump method also prevail for the light notrump method.

Examples of light or weak non-vulnerable notrumps:

♠ A 9 8 2    ♥ K 7    ♦ K J 5    ♣ Q 10 8 2

13 points. Bid one notrump, not vulnerable.

♠ A J 7    ♥ A 6 4    ♦ Q 10 8    ♣ K J 5 3

15 points. Bid one notrump, not vulnerable.

If vulnerable, bid one club on either of the two examples.

Again,

♠ K J 9    ♥ A Q 5 2    ♦ J 7 3    ♣ A Q 9

The count is 17 points. Hence the hand is too strong for one notrump

not vulnerable and should be opened with one heart; vulnerable, it is within the proper limits of an opening one notrump.

Responder should raise the non-vulnerable opening one notrump to two notrump with 11 or 12 points; at times with 10. The opener will pass with 13 points and bid three notrump with 14 or 15. With 13-17 points, responder should bid three notrump. With 18 or 19 points he should try for a slam, and with 20 or more bid a slam.

With a five-card or longer major suit or with an unbalanced hand, he should make a forcing takeout with 13 or more points. A takeout of two in a suit is not forcing when this light opening notrump method is used.

The light notrump is an optional feature of the Culbertson System but the opponents must be informed of its use. The light notrump is not as popular as the strong notrump; it is more difficult to handle, since the partners must keep in mind two scales of values, vulnerable and not vulnerable. In most other respects the light notrump has distinct advantages over the strong notrump. The strong notrump, though artistically beautiful, occurs infrequently in the course of an evening's play. The light notrump is not only many times more frequent (and, therefore, of greater practical value) but is a powerful defensive bid depriving the opponents of the valuable one-level and forcing them to climb to the level of two or three. The light notrump is annoying to expert opposition and is devastating to inexperienced opposition. At the same time it conveys valuable information to partner, especially on distribution. It creates favorable situations for penalty doubles. One of the great advantages of an opening notrump bid is that hands containing tenaces (A Q, A J, K J, Q 10, etc.) are led up to, instead of being led through the dummy. Use of the light notrump makes it possible to exploit a far greater number of these tenaced hands.

The popularity and the great accuracy of point-counting at notrump are good reasons for reviving the old issue of weak vs. strong notrumps.

In conclusion, notrump point valuation is simple whether it be with strong or light notrumps. Notrump bidding is smooth and logically satisfying. However, notrump is not the star of contract bidding.

### **Different Ways to Value the Same Hand**

The same hand may be valued in several different ways. There is declarer's valuation, when you are bidding your own suit, or making



the first notrump bid for your side. There is a different valuation for raising your partner's bid. There is revaluation of your hand when you have bid a suit and partner has raised it.

For instance you hold:

♠ A Q   ♥ Q 10 9 2   ♦ A Q 9 8 5   ♣ Q 10

The high-card points of this hand remain unchanged throughout the bidding. But the number of distributional points will change according to the proposed bid. You have:

For an opening notrump bid . . . . .	16 High-Card Points.
For an opening one-diamond bid, or for a two-diamond takeout of partner's one-spade bid . . . . .	18 (16 H-C + 1 Low-Card Point in trumps + 1 L-C in hearts.)
In support of partner's one-heart bid . .	19 (16 H-C + 3 L-C).
In revaluation of the hand for a diamond contract, if partner raises diamonds . . . . .	19 (16 H-C + 3 L-C).
For a notrump rebid, if partner raises notrump . . . . .	17 (16 H-C + 1 for the five-card length).

The revaluation of the trump suit arises from the fact that the opener, whose first bid is made in the dark, cannot assume a favorable distribution for his trump suit; but when his suit is raised he knows the distribution of his trump suit will be more favorable and therefore revalues his trump suit upward.

Last, and most important, there is a sixth kind of valuation: valuation of high cards *against* opponents' trump bids. This valuation is based on the count of *defensive winners* in partnership *and* opponents' hands. In this manner, the partners are able to gauge the *limits* of opponents' bids. They can then penalize the opponents (when they are out on a limb), or perhaps make a profitable sacrifice bid (when a game or a slam by the opponents appears probable).

In conclusion, a bridge player is like a quick-change actor who, though appearing in the same play, must perform in six different roles. If we leave out the point valuation of the hand at notrump bids and *against* opponents' trump bids treated elsewhere, we would then have three basic bidding situations in which the same hand will be valued

differently. They are: the declarer's hand, the raiser's hand, and the opener's hand after partner has raised his suit (declarer's revaluation).

The declarer's hand is usually the opener's hand, and the raiser's hand is usually the responding hand. However, declarer may become the raiser and vice versa, depending on who bids a suit and who raises it.

We now come to the most important and original part of bidding valuation by a point-count method: The Culbertson point-count valuation of trump bids.

## CHAPTER 3

# Culbertson Point-Count Valuation of Trump Bids

To obtain the exact point-count of any hand, whether as declarer or responder at a trump bid:

I Count the high-card points on the basis of the improved 4-3-2-1 count for trump bids. See the Table below.

II Count the low-card (distributional) points on the basis of the Culbertson Rule of Three and Four. See the Rule below.

III The combined count of high-card and low-card (distributional) points will give the total value of the hand.

### I The 4-3-2-1 Count for Trump Bids

(For High Cards Only)

Ace	= 4 points
King	= 3 points
Queen	= 2 points
Jack	= 1 point

### THE CORRECTION POINTS

The following correction points deal with the additions or deductions in *high-card valuation only*.

Deduct 1 point for a singleton King or a doubleton Queen-Jack in a plain suit, i.e. any suit that is neither partner's nor own trump bid.

Deduct 1 point if the hand contains no Ace.

### II Culbertson Rule of Three and Four

(For All Distributional Values in Trump Bids)

1. Count 1 point for every card over three in every four-card or longer suit in opening or responding hands.

There is only one important exception to this universal formula and it deals with trump suits in the declarer's hand.

2. In the declarer's hand, count 1 point for every card over four in his own trump suit (before it is raised); but count 1 point for every card over three after his trump suit is raised (Declarer's Revaluation). In the raising hand simply count 1 point for every card over three in every suit (trump or plain).

Do not count the short suits, i.e. singletons or doubletons, in any hand. Do not count voids. (The only exception is a minor one, when the responder adds 1 correction point for a void or two singletons.)

#### 1. OPENER'S HAND

Spades Trumps

♠ A K 7 5 4	8 (7 + 1)
♥ Q J 3	3
♦ K 7 5 4	4 (3 + 1)
♣ 3	0

15

#### 2. RESPONDER'S HAND

In Support of Spades

♠ Q J 6 3	4 (3 + 1)
♥ A 6	4
♦ A 9 3 2	5 (4 + 1)
♣ 10 8 6	0

13

The simplicity of this formula, when compared to any other point count of distributional values, is evident at a glance. Its extraordinary accuracy will be readily seen by the reader himself, who can submit it to the acid test of experience on actual hands; or he can compare it with other point-counts by means of the Table of Hand Patterns (page 52), ranging from the most common, 4-4-3-2, to the super-freaks.

Let us now see how this general Rule of Three and Four applies to the three specific situations: The opener's hand, the responding hand, and the opener's hand after his suit has been raised (Declarer's Revaluation).

### The Three and Four Count for the Declarer's Hand

In addition to your high-card points:

- A. Count 1 point for every card over *four* in declarer's trump suit;
- B. Count 1 point for every card over *three* in declarer's side suit or suits.

For instance, the opener opens with a bid of one in spades. He holds a hand-pattern 4(trump)-4-3-2. It is worth at his spade bid, 1 distribu-

tional point for the fourth card of the side suit. The four-card trump is not counted. Again, with 5(trump)-4-3-1, the opener's hand is worth 2 distributional points, 1 for the fifth trump card and 1 for the fourth plain-suit card.

The distributional points so obtained when added to the high-card points of the 4-3-2-1 count, will give the total point-count of the hand at declarer's trump bid.

### Basic Point Requirements for Opening Suit-Bids of One

**14 points or better.** ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 H. T.). Automatic and obligatory opening suit-bid of one, in any position, and under all circumstances—except for hands that are better opened with opening notrump bids of one or higher, and the forcing two-bid.

**13 points.** (3 H. T.). Open as a rule. The only exception is a bare 13-point hand (usually distributed 4-3-3-3) or no escape if partner pushes the opener to the level of two.

**12 points.** ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  H. T.). A good five-card suit (A-Q or three of the five honors; or a six-card or longer suit). The hand must contain two defensive tricks (combinations of honor-tricks like A-K, A-Q, A, K-Q or K-x).

**11 points.** (only with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  defensive tricks—see page 78). A good five-card suit headed by A Q or A K, with an Ace or King outside, as in the 11-point example below.

#### EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE THREE AND FOUR COUNT FOR DECLARER'S HAND, IN OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE

♠ A K 8 4 2	8 (7 + 1)
♥ 7 3	0
♦ J 10	1
♣ K 8 4 3	4 (3 + 1)

*Bid one spade* 13

♠ A Q 10 9 6	7 (6 + 1)
♥ A 8 6	4
♦ 7 2	0
♣ 5 4 3	0

*Bid one spade* 11

♠ 5 3	0
♥ 10 7 6 2	1
♦ A Q 5	6
♣ A K 6 4	7

*Bid one club* 14

♠ A K J 7 3	9 (8 + 1)
♥ 10 7 5	0
♦ K 3 2	3
♣ 8 7	0

*Bid one spade* 12

Note that an 11-point hand is rarely bid—only when the hand has a good five-card suit (headed by A Q or A K),  $2\frac{1}{2}$  defensive tricks, and some intermediate strength (tens, nines, etc.).

For detailed and advanced treatment of opening suit-bids of one, see Chapter 9.

### **The Three and Four Count for the Raising Hand**

In addition to your high-card points:

- A. Count 1 point for every card over three in every suit.
- B. Add 2 extra points for a six-card or longer trump suit.

That is all. The new Three and Four Count will eliminate once and for all the drudgery and the complexities of the separate point-count for short suits. It can actually be learned and used at a glance.

Even the correction points, inevitable in any point-count method, are relatively few and simple.

#### **CORRECTION POINTS FOR DISTRIBUTIONAL VALUES IN THE RESPONDING HAND**

- A. Add 1 point for a void or two singletons (freaks).
- B. Deduct 1 point for only three trumps.
- C. Deduct 1 point from the total count of the hand-pattern 4-3-3-3 (for its congenital weakness). This deduction applies only to the responding hand and only for trump raises.

The sum of high cards and length points will give the precise total point-count of the responding hand in support of opener's trump bids and at his own trump bids.

### **Basic Point Requirements for Responses**

#### **Raises:**

A single raise, 6-10 points. Double raise, 13-16 points. Triple raise (pre-emptive) 12-14 points, but not including more than 8 points in high cards.

EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE THREE AND FOUR COUNT  
FOR THE RAISING HAND

Partner Opens with One Spade

♠ Q 7 6	1 (2 — 1)	♠ K 8 5 2	4 (3 + 1)
♥ K 5 4 3 2	5 (3 + 2)	♥ K J 6	4
♦ 6 5	0	♦ 10 9 4	0
♣ K 7 5	3	♣ 8 3 2	0
			7 (8 — 1)

1 point was deducted for having only three trumps.

1 point was deducted for having 4-3-3-3 distribution.

♠ 10 5 4 3 2	2	♠ 10 8 7 6 5 3	5 (3 + 2)
♥ K 9 5	3	♥ 9	
♦ 8 7 6	0	♦ 5	
♣ 5 2	0	♣ Q 8 7 6 2	4 (2 + 2)

10

A shaded raise may be given on 5 points when the hand contains five-card trump support.

2 points were added for the six-card trump length and 1 point for having a freak (two singletons).

**The Three and Four Count for Suit Takeouts:**

When partner has opened with a suit-bid of one, for purposes of responding with a bid in your own suit, you value your hand exactly as the opener does:

Count your high-card points and:

A. Count 1 point for every card over *four* in the suit you bid.

B. Count 1 point for every card over *three* in each other suit, including the suit of partner's opening bid.

**Suit Takeouts** (responses with a new suit-bid):

At the one level, 5 points minimum. At the two level (non-jump) 10 points. With hands of intermediate strength counting 11 or 12 points, try to bid twice, though you are not strong enough to force partner to game. All suit takeouts are valued as declarer's hand, i.e., 1 point for each card in the trump suit after four, and after three in side suits.

*For example:* Partner bids one spade. You value the following hand for a takeout of two hearts:

♠ Q J	3
♥ Q 10 8 7 6 3	4 (2 + 2)
♦ A 9 6 2	5 (4 + 1)
♣ 5	0

12

Note that the doubleton Q-J in spades is given full value because partner bid the suit; in hearts, 1 point is counted for each card *over four*, because responder is valuing his hand as declarer with hearts trumps. The 12-point total justifies a two-heart response to partner's one spade.

#### Notrump Takeouts:

A notrump takeout of partner's opening suit-bid is valued the same as an opening notrump bid: *Only high cards are counted.*

One notrump, 6-10 points. Two notrump, 13-15 points. Three notrump, 16-18 points.

### The Three and Four Count for Declarer's Revaluation (After the Opener's Trump Suit Has Been Raised)

Declarer in his original valuation of the trump suit assumes *unfavorable* distribution of the suit. Consequently, a five-card trump suit is valued at 1 distributional point and a six-card trump suit at 2 distributional points. However, when the responding hand raises the trump suit, the declarer's own trump suit is greatly enhanced in distributional value. Hence the importance of revaluation of declarer's trump suit after a raise.

After the opener's trump suit has been raised, he must revalue his hand as follows:

1. Count 1 point for every card over three in every suit (including the trump suit). But do not count anything for a four-card trump suit unless partner has raised it twice.
2. Add 2 extra points for a 6-card or longer trump suit.

There are no other correction points in Declarer's Revaluation. Thus, Declarer's Revaluation is simplicity itself.



For example, you opened with one spade and partner raised to two spades. Your hand is:

♠	A Q 10 6 5 3	11 (6 + 3 + 2)
♥	10 9 5 2	1
♦	A 5	4
♣	3	0
		<hr/>
		16

Originally you counted 1 point for each card over *four* in spades. Your 13 points, plus even the maximum of 10 shown by partner's raise, would give you 23 points at most, and therefore you would pass.

But on revaluation, you count 1 point for each spade over *three* (plus the constant 2-point addition for the six-card suit). This raises your count to 16. If partner had either 9 or 10 points for his raise you are in the game zone. This suggests a rebid of three spades, which will probably be safe enough even if partner had a near-minimum and must pass it.

## CHAPTER 4

# The Finer Points of Hand Valuation

I have been asked: By what steps did we arrive at the formula of 3 & 4?

First, we built the most accurate possible point-count regardless of complications. Then we reduced it to a mathematical formula (and happily found that it worked even more accurately). The 4-3-2-1 count plus the 3 & 4 formula will accurately value more than 95% of all bridge hands. *No other point-count method can do nearly so well.*

It would be nice if this simple process would give a good valuation of every hand without exception. Unfortunately, there are some values that are by no means constant. To value them in all hands would lead to overbidding, or to underbidding, which is often a worse crime. Hence the necessity for correction points to approach the ideal of 100% accuracy for expert bidding. Some of these correction points are already familiar to the reader. Below I am giving additional correction points. They are not necessary for beginners but are necessary in advanced valuation and especially in expert bidding where a decision on a fine point of valuation may spell the difference between a victory or a defeat. The finer points below apply virtually to all point-count methods although they have been developed originally for Culbertson point-count valuation. The principal ones are as follows:

### Correction Points to Be Deducted

1. **Unsupported Queens and Jacks.** For notrump bids, all honors are counted at their full value. For opening trump bids, however, such a holding as Q-x-x, or J-x-x, or Q-x, or J-x—that is, a Queen or Jack that is *not in combination with another honor*—is somewhat overvalued. Therefore, *deduct 1 point* if your hand contains one or more Queens or Jacks not in combination with another honor. This correction, though not used in other point-count methods, is among the important ones.

It helps eliminate disastrously weak opening bids. For instance:

♠ A K J 7 3     ♥ Q 7 2     ♦ 10 7 4 3     ♣ 6

Spades trumps. The hand counts 12 points ( $10 + 2$ ), but 1 point is deducted for the uncombined Queen, bringing the count down to 11. Pass.

Do not deduct more than 1 point for uncombined honors, even if you have two or more of them:

♠ A K 8 6 3     ♥ Q 7 2     ♦ J 7 4 3     ♣ 6

Spades trumps. This hand still counts 11 points ( $10 + 2$ , minus 1). Though you have two uncombined honors, you deduct only 1 point.

Do not deduct for a Queen or Jack that is combined with another honor, as in A Q x, A J x, J 10 x. Do not deduct for a Queen or Jack heading a five-card suit, as Q-x-x-x-x.

Do not deduct for a Queen or Jack in a suit your partner has bid. And, to repeat, do not make this deduction in *notrump* valuation.

*You do not need to make the deduction of 1 point for unsupported Queens and Jacks if your hand contains  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. This is not quite as accurate as the straight deduction of 1 point but the difference is very slight.*

2. Weak four-card trump suits in 4-4-3-2 and 4-3-3-3 hand-patterns. In the *raising hand*, do not count the trump suit in a 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2 hand unless it is headed by at least King, or Q-10, or better.

♠ J 8 4 3     ♥ K 8 4 2     ♦ 9 4 3     ♣ 8 2

Partner bids one spade. Count only 5 points ( $4 + 1$  for the side length). Do not count 1 point for length in the trump suit.

In *declarer's revaluation*, do not count an extra point for a four-card trump length, when partner raises only once.

♠ A Q 6 5	6
♥ K 10 7 3	4 ( $3 + 1$ )
♦ A J 6	5
♣ 3 2	0

---

15

You open with one spade and partner raises to two spades. You count nothing for the fourth card in your trump suit.

However, if partner has raised *twice*, you count your fourth trump and obtain 16 points for your revalued hand. The reason for this correction is to give added protection to the opener in case partner raised with three trumps only.

## Correction Points to Be Added

### 1. Solid and Near Solid Suits.

a. Add 1 point for each suit (trump or plain) in which you have 100 honors.

b. Add 2 points for each suit (trump or plain) in which you have 150 honors.

The reason for this important correction point does not lie so much in the fact that you get an extra bonus for four or five honors, as in the fact that hands with solid or nearly solid (one loser only) suits are distributionally considerably stronger.

In rebid situations even a combination like A J 10 or K J 10 without the fourth honor is worth an extra point.

2. **The Problem of Tens.** One or more tens, when in combination with a higher honor, is definitely a "plus" value. In rebid situations a ten may attain the value of a full point when in combinations like K Q 10 x or K J 10 x. The general principle about the tens is as follows:

*For Rebid Situations (Trump or Notrump):* In any suit (trump or plain), add 1 point for two tens if each is accompanied by one higher honor; or for one ten if it is preceded by two higher honors. For example, K 10 x x and Q 10 x x in another suit are worth 1 point more in a rebid situation; A J 10 x x or K Q 10 x is worth 1 point more.

NOTE: In all cases where Jacks or tens are given an extra value, they are not to be counted for slam bidding; also when a ten is valued as part of a solid or near solid suit it cannot be valued as in combination with higher honors.

In general the principle that the *positional* value of honor cards is modified according to bidding which we apply to honor-trick valuation also applies to point-count valuation. For instance, ♣ K x usually worth 3 points may drop to 2 points or even 1 point if the bidding discloses a strong club suit on the left.

3. **Honors in combination** are worth more than isolated honors. A-K-x and A-x-x + K-x-x of a different suit count the same; but A-K-x will often win an extra trick. This is a defect inherent in the 4-3-2-1 count. (In the honor-trick valuation A-K-x is worth 2 tricks and A-x + K-x only 1½ tricks.) This defect is partly taken care of when a point is deducted for unsupported Queens and Jacks, but hands in which Kings are not in combination with other honors must be regarded as somewhat weakened. Conversely, hands with honors in combination are rated somewhat higher than their actual count.

♠ A K 6 4      ♥ A Q 7      ♦ 5 4 3      ♣ 6 5 2

This hand has 13 points but no good rebid; hence it would be a pass, first or second hand. However, the expert would consider the following issues: All the honors are in combination. The hand contains two Aces. These advantages bring the hand closer to 14 points than to 13. Consequently he would open.

It is only occasionally that revaluation of this type will turn a pass to a bid, or a one-bid to a two-bid. In all but a few rare cases, the player following our method closely will come out with expert bids and passes.

## CHAPTER 5

# How to Count Points Rapidly

Heretofore one of the great drawbacks to point-count bidding has been the amount of time players have had to spend in the mere process of counting up their points.

The following method for the rapid count of hands should enable a player, after a moderate amount of practice, to give the high-card count of many hands containing six or more honors by simply glancing at them.

The basic principle is as follows: the player learns to recognize certain combinations of three or four cards as representing a certain number. Whenever he sees these combinations, he recognizes them and knows the count. Then he merely adds the remaining count in the hand to the known count of the combination. Or it may be possible with a big hand to obtain two complete combinations and simply add them together.

This reduces mathematical computations to one or at most two, against the five additions required to count six high cards, six for seven cards, etc. The method will be presented in three lessons. The reader should gain facility in applying what he learns in one lesson before moving on to the next one.

### Lesson 1: The Basic Method

Consider the holding AKQJ in a suit. This apparently ordinary holding actually has rather unusual qualities. First, it represents exactly an average holding, or one-quarter of the deck. Second, it counts exactly 10, an easy number to work with. This fact may easily be established by counting  $4 + 3 = 7 + 2 = 9 + 1 = 10$ , or by dividing the total of 40 points in the deck by 4. A player noting this combination should have no difficulty—he simply says 10 to himself whenever he encounters it. In any hand having this combination, three mathematical steps have already been saved.

With only this start, note the following hand:

♠ A 7     ♥ A K Q J 5     ♦ 6 4 2     ♣ 8 4 3

This hand can instantly be appraised at 14 high-card points— $10 + 4$ .

The Ace, King, Queen, Jack do not, of course, have to be in the same suit.

♠ A 7     ♥ K Q J 5 4     ♦ A 6 2     ♣ 8 4 3

One Ace is simply mentally placed with the K Q J and the high-card total recognized as 10.  $10 + 4 = 14$ .

For that matter, the A K Q J may be in different suits, but can easily be picked out.

♠ A 7 5     ♥ J 4 2     ♦ Q 6 5 3     ♣ K 7 6

The A K Q J can be instantly noted, and the result, 10, recognized.

Take slightly more complicated examples:

♠ A Q 7     ♥ K Q 6 5 3     ♦ K J 4     ♣ 8 2

Take out the A, K, Q, and J (A Q 7, K J 4) known to be 10, from the two suits, and a K and a Q remain, easily seen to be 5. The sum, 15, can quickly be reached.

♠ A 6     ♥ A K Q 7 2     ♦ Q J 5     ♣ K J 4

To get the count of this hand by adding each honor is quite a job, but by using our method, the answer, 20, can be reached almost instantaneously. The hand is composed of two sets of A K Q J's! Add the Queen of spades to the hand, and it can be counted almost as quickly, as the Queen is simply added to the two sets of A K Q J's, or 20, giving 22. Omit the Jack of diamonds and the count is easily seen to be 19, or one point less than the two sets of A K Q J's, etc.

To visualize A K Q J as 10 is easy. Scarcely more difficult is to note that if the Jack is missing, that is just 1 point less. Consequently it should be easy to note and remember that A, K, Q is 9. This gives a quick count on hands where the Jack is missing. Thus,

♠ A K Q 7     ♥ A K Q 5 4     ♦ 3 2     ♣ 8 6

can be seen at a glance to be 18. Remove either Queen and the result is

$9 + 7 = 16$ —one operation. Add the King of clubs, and we have  $18 + 3 = 21$ , etc.

♠ A Q 7    ♥ A K 5 4    ♦ K 3 2    ♣ Q 6 5

can easily be seen to be A K Q + A K Q, or 18, etc.

This combination will permit the rapid counting of many additional hands.

In this lesson the reader should also memorize the following two-card combinations:

$$A K = 7$$

$$A Q = 6$$

When practicing this lesson, the player should avoid adding 4 and 3 to obtain 7. He should look at the combination A K, and use the combination count. If, by chance, he cannot remember what the combination count is, it is a cinch to obtain it, and this will shortly fix the count in his mind. A sure way to memorize anything eventually is to attempt to remember it, and, if unsuccessful, to refresh one's memory.

This may seem unimportant, as it is so easy to add 4 and 3, etc. But, remember, *knowing* the total instead of having to obtain it saves one full mathematical step in counting hands.

Obviously the A K or K Q, etc., do not have to be in the same suit to be regarded as units of 7 or 5. A x x and K x x should be regarded as 7 points without counting.

Let us now return to Hand 4:

♠ A Q 7    ♥ K Q 6 5 3    ♦ K J 4    ♣ 8 2

After taking out the A K Q J, a unit of 10, the K + Q unit is left, known to be 5 without even adding 3 and 2. The hand is quickly seen to be  $10 + 5$ , only one easy mathematical step being necessary.

An easy method is now apparent for counting certain combinations. ♠ A K x x, ♥ A K x can quickly be seen to be twice 7, or 14; ♠ A Q x, ♥ A Q x, is twice 6, or 12. ♠ A K x, ♥ A K x, ♦ A K x (if you are lucky enough to hold it) is 3 times 7, or 21. Likewise, three A Q's are 3 times 6, or 18. (See Lesson 3, page 36.)

Before going on to the next lesson, the reader should gain facility, by practice, with the method given above. Hands in this or another book can be used, or hands actually dealt. If the method does not apply



easily to a hand, disregard the hand or, if playing, add it by the piecemeal method.

## Lesson 2: Supplementary Method

The method described in the first lesson will provide for rapid counting of a great many hands. However, it does not work in hands where the honors are all (or sometimes almost all) of two denominations. A few such hands were shown at the end of Lesson 1.

### Four of a Kind

Obviously the count of fours (or threes) of a kind can be most easily obtained by multiplying rather than adding, and this is commonly done. However, if a player learns to recognize four Aces as 16, four Kings as 12, and four Queens as 8, he will save the step of multiplying. Of course, if the number does not occur to him, he can easily obtain it, and next time will doubtless remember it.

♠ A 7 2    ♥ A 6 3    ♦ A 5 2    ♣ K 7 5 4

The result here can be obtained quite easily— $3 \times 4 = 12 + 3 = 15$ . However, it is still easier to think of the result as 1 point less than four Aces (16). Thus, the count of 15 is arrived at instantaneously. This operation does not save a step over the first method; it is easier only because adding or subtracting 1 point is an effortless operation.

Also, three Kings and an Ace is 1 more than four Kings (12) or 13; three Kings and a Queen is 1 less than four Kings, or 11, etc.

Hands containing three or four of a kind and one other card are easy to count either by the method above or by adding the lone card to the count of the three or four. Thus,

♠ A K 7    ♥ A 5 3    ♦ A 6 5 4    ♣ A 4 2

can be quickly seen to be  $16 + 3 = 19$ .

♠ K Q 5    ♥ K 4 2    ♦ K 7 6 5    ♣ K 4 3

as  $12 + 2 = 14$ .

♠ K Q 5    ♥ K 4 2    ♦ K 7 6 5    ♣ 5 4 3

Easiest method, one less than four Kings (12) is 11.

Where at least two cards are held in each denomination, the method is as follows: *Take the count of the paired cards and then add what is left.*

♥ A K 5 4     ♦ A 6 3     ♣ 5 4 2

By now you should know without counting that A K = 7. Two sevens =  $14 + 4 = 18$ . This is a whole step shorter than saying that three fours = 12, two threes = 6,  $12 + 6 = 18$ .

♠ A Q 2     ♥ A 7 6     ♦ Q 4 3 2     ♣ Q 5 4

The A Q is known to be 6; so two 6's =  $12 + 2$  (for the Queen left over) = 14.

Hands like this can be counted fairly quickly as just stated, but if the player is willing to memorize three combinations of cards, the number of steps can be reduced to one and the count of the hand obtained instantaneously.

Learn to recognize as units:

A K, A K as 14 points

A Q, A Q as 12 points

K Q, K Q as 10 points

By always trying to remember the count of these holdings before obtaining them, you will soon impress them on your memory.

Then the count of the two hands above will simply go 14 (A K, A K) + 4 = 18; and 12 (A Q, A Q) + 2 = 14. Note that the Aces and Kings or Queens do not have to be in the same suit.

♠ A 7 6     ♥ K 4 2     ♦ K 5 4 3     ♣ A 7 6

should also be recognized as a unit of 14.

♠ A K 7     ♥ A K 5     ♦ A K 4 3     ♣ A K 2

the count of this hand, if you are ever lucky enough to hold it, can quickly be seen to be  $4 \times 7$ , or 28. Substitute a Queen for one of the Kings, and it would be 28 less 1, or 27—and so on.

♠ K Q 7     ♥ K Q 5 4     ♦ K 6 2     ♣ 6 4 3

comes out 10 (K Q, K Q) + 3 = 13.

♠ A Q 7     ♥ A Q 5 4     ♦ A Q 2     ♣ J 6 3

can be easily obtained as  $3 \times 6 = 18 + 1 = 19$ .

♠ K Q 7    ♥ K Q 5    ♦ K 4 3    ♣ Q 6 4 2

is very easy— $3 \times 5 = 15$ .

Naturally, the methods just stated give only the high-card count; long-suit credits, or deductions, must be computed separately.

### Lesson 3: Substitutions

The combinations in Lessons 1 and 2 are the most useful for faster counting, but they do not cover all hands. The following methods are somewhat more difficult, but should be helpful with other combinations. A K Q is easy to remember as 9 points. Other helpful counts to know are A K J, equals 8; A Q J, equals 7; and K Q J, equals 6.

Mentally substituting one card for another may be a helpful device in counting. A King equals a Queen plus a Jack; each is 3 points. Consequently a King may be considered as a Queen-Jack in reaching the count of 10. Thus, A, K, K can be visualized as A K Q J or 10. Or A x, Q J x, Q J x, may also be visualized as A K Q J, or 10. Or take such combinations as A Q J, A x x. Consider one Ace as a King and add 1 point; you then have A K Q J + 1 = 11. With K Q J, K x x, consider one King to be an Ace, and you have A K Q J - 1 = 9.

Obviously, this is not as good as the combinations in Lesson 1, but still this may be helpful for those who are willing to use their imaginations.

In the type of hand in Lesson 2, consisting mainly of only two denominations, combinations containing the Jack were not given. These combinations are rather easy to count without any method, as the unit (Jack) is easy to add or subtract. In addition to A K, A Q and K Q there are also A J, K J, and Q J. The reader may learn to recognize these as 5, 4, and 3 and A J + A J as 10; K J + K J as 8; and Q J + Q J as 6. However, these combinations are fairly easy to add in the normal way. It may, therefore, seem best to the reader not to bother with them.

## CHAPTER 6

# The 3 & 4 Count Compared to Other Point-Counts

(For Distributional Values)

Before the new Count of 3 & 4 was developed, there were two chief methods for counting the distributional values: the long-suit count and the Goren (short-suit) count. Both methods use the basic 4-3-2-1 count for high cards, except that some writers give the value of  $\frac{1}{2}$  point for each of the tens.

The simplest and the most inaccurate count is the one recommended by Fred L. Karpin. In declarer's hand he counts the high-card points, to which he adds the long cards, which he defines as "the fifth and sixth cards of any *one suit*." Less embryonic but more complicated (and not much less inaccurate) is the Solomon-Disbrow count published in their book, excellent in parts, *Slam Bidding and Point Count*. To their 4-3-2-1- $\frac{1}{2}$  count of high cards they add in declarer's hand the long cards, derived as follows:

### "Long-Card Valuation Table

"Add 1 point for each card over four in a suit. With two long suits, add 1 point for each card over four in one suit and  $\frac{1}{2}$  point for every card over four in the other suit.

"After there is an agreement in the trump suit (a fit), add 1 point for the fifth card in the trump suit, add 2 points for the sixth card, add 2 points for the seventh card, etc.; add 1 point for every card over four in any side suit."

The complications here are enough to frustrate the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff. They might be tolerated if they were indispensable. But they are not necessary and they are far less accurate than either the Goren or

the 3 & 4 count. In the responding hand, Karpin and Solomon-Disbrow include, in addition, a separate count for short suits.

Both the Karpin and Solomon-Disbrow counts, although pretending that they are valuing the long suits, are blissfully oblivious of the most important long suit in bridge—the four-card length. They are also oblivious to the enormous difference from the standpoint of length values (and short suits) between the various hand-distributions in declarer's and responding hands.

A hand-pattern such as 4-4-3-2, which is the most common of all (22% of frequency), or the 4-4-4-1 which simply oozes with distributional values, are ignored. The 5-3-3-2 hand-pattern and the 5-4-3-1 are treated as though they were twin brothers, each getting 1 point for a five-card length. And yet from the standpoint of distributional values, there is a gulf between them. This is not modern contract bridge; this is going back to the old pre-distribution era when contract bridge was played as "a game of Aces and Kings" and the devil take the hindmost.

Seventy percent of bridge hands (hand-patterns) contain a four-card suit and sixty percent of hands are, at least, semi-two-suiters, containing a four-card and another longer suit. This means that a large number of perfectly good opening suit-bids would have to be passed because, lacking the values for four-card lengths, the opener's count of high card and distributional points will not reach the minimum requirements for opening suit-bids. (12 points, but only with a rebiddable suit.) As a result, many game hands will be passed out, and, in other cases, the reaching of game by opponents will be made easier. For instance, the player holds:

♠ A 9 7 2      ♥ A Q 6 5 3      ♦ 7 4 3      ♣ 6

In our method it is an opening bid. The hand contains 10 points in high cards and 2 low-card points. With 12 points and a rebiddable suit (also  $2\frac{1}{2}$  defensive tricks) we have an opening bid of one heart. But if you use the Solomon-Disbrow count you have no choice but to pass originally. This hand counts only 10 points in high cards and 1 point for the fifth length, in all, 11 points—not enough for an opening bid. And yet if partner holds as little as:

♠ K 6 5 4 3      ♥ K 7 4 2      ♦ 6      ♣ 7 5 3

a game in either spades or hearts is virtually guaranteed.

This example illustrates the ultra-conservative trend of many players (especially in duplicate bridge) to pass out light but sound opening bids. As a result, they are hurt in two ways: they lose games when partner holds hands which are rich in distributional values, though relatively poor in high cards; and what is even worse, they *give* games to opponents, when partner is relatively weak, by failing to open with sound and lead-directing bids. In bridge, as in war, attack is usually the best defense; except for a psychological trap pass with a freak, there is no better strategical maneuver than to occupy the all-important bidding level of one as soon as possible.

These considerations are proof enough that point-count methods of valuation (Solomon-Disbrow, Karpin and others) when based on the count of five-card or longer suits only, are somewhat embryonic.

### The Goren Count

A far better method for point-count of distributional values in declarer's hand has been devised by Charles H. Goren and his friends. I quote from his *Point Count Bidding*:

"The value of a hand for purposes of opening the bidding is computed by adding the high card point count (4-3-2-1) to the *points assigned for distribution*. The points assigned for distribution are as follows:

Add 3 points for a void  
 Add 2 points for each singleton  
 Add 1 point for each doubleton"

For instance,

♠ A K x x x      ♥ K x x x x      ♦ x x      ♣ x

On Goren's count this hand is worth, for the opening bid, 13 points: 10 points in high cards and 3 points for two 5-card *lengths* derived by valuing the singleton at 2 points and the doubleton at 1 point. Exactly the same results are obtained in the 3 & 4 count.

These distributional points in the Goren count are given not for ruffers in the raiser's hand, but for lengths in declarer's hand. They are purely artificial, but sound. The long suits are not counted directly; they are counted indirectly, simply by counting the short suits and voids in the hand. For instance, with a hand-pattern 6-4-2-1 the Goren count would produce 3 distributional points. The Goren count in opener's

hand is exactly the same as the 3 & 4 count. Both counts include in their valuation the count of four-card lengths in side suits. With hand-pattern 4-4-4-1 at an opening spade bid (the first four-card length) both methods give 2 distributional points for the two four-card side suits. Goren derives these 2 points by ascribing the artificial value of 2 points to a singleton; we derive the 2 points by a natural count of 1 point for each card over three in the side suits. Both methods are remarkably accurate, although they took different routes to arrive at the same conclusion. (There is an inner mathematical relation between both counts in the declarer's hand, but it is too involved to discuss on these pages.)

Let us see how the two counts for declarer's valuation compare with actual hands. The following hands are Goren's own examples used to illustrate his count (see *Point Count Bidding*, pages 2-5) and to prove the weakness of the rival Karpin and other counts:

(A) ♠ A K 10 x x  
♥ A x x  
♦ x x x  
♣ x x

(B) ♠ A K 10 x x  
♥ A x x x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x

"Which one is better?" Goren asks. "Definitely hand (B). What is the margin of superiority? The fourth heart, for which some writers have not made allowance. By assigning a point for each of the doubletons, we reach a value of 13 points for hand (B) compared with 12 for hand (A)."

By the 3 & 4 count we get identical results by going direct to the values instead of ricocheting from the artificial short suits. In hand (A) we have one distributional point for the fifth spade. In hand (B) we have two distributional points: one for the fifth spade and one for the fourth heart.

Goren continues:

"It will be seen that if only the fifth card in a suit is taken into consideration the following three hands would all have the same value:

(A)  
♠ A 10 x x  
♥ A x x  
♦ A x x  
♣ x x x

(B)  
♠ A 10 x x  
♥ A x x x  
♦ A x x  
♣ x x

(C)  
♠ A 10 x x  
♥ A x x x  
♦ x  
♣

This is obviously unsound. By assigning distributional points, 1 point for a doubleton, 2 points for a singleton, we arrive at the accurate valuation of these hands:

(A)—12

(B)—13

(C)—14"

Again, I quite agree with Charlie Goren, both in his strictures against the rival counts and in his claim for the superior distributional precision of his own count. The only thing I need add is the fact that the 3 & 4 count gives exactly the same results without beating around the distributional bush. At the same time, it is more natural and simpler. Hand (A) has only 12 high-card points because there is no trump length over four. Hand (B) has 13 points because the fourth card in the side heart suit is worth 1 point; and hand (C) has 14 points because two fourth cards in hearts and clubs are worth 1 point each.

Let us see how this comparison of two counts works with two-suiters. Again, the following two hands are from Goren's book.

(A)

♠ A Q x x x

♥ A 10 x x x

♦ x x

♣ x

(B)

♠ A Q x x x

♥ A 10 x

♦ x x x

♣ x x

Mr. Goren points out, quite correctly, that each hand contains only 10 points in high cards; and yet hand (A) is obviously 2 points better than hand (B).

"If only the fifth spade," Goren writes about hand (A), "were taken into consideration the hand would have a value of 11 points, and would be an obvious pass. But allowing for the singleton and 1 point for the doubleton brings the value of the hand to 13 points. Since an easy rebid of two hearts is available, the hand should be opened with one spade." Exactly the same argument applies to the 3 & 4 count except that instead of singleton and doubleton valuation we have a natural valuation of 1 point for the fifth trump and 2 points for the heart suit.

Mr. Goren concludes his brilliant attack against the older rival point-count methods in the declarer's hand: "Counting the singleton and doubleton has not only permitted us to reach the exact valuation for the hand, but has actually lightened our mental burden, in the sense that it did some of our thinking for us."

It would have been better had Charlie Goren done some more think-



ing for himself instead of relying on his short suits and voids to lighten the mental burden. Then he might have reached a logical conclusion for his arguments: The conclusion is to do away entirely with his valuation of short suits in declarer's hand as unnecessary and cumbersome (not Culbertson). All Goren had to do is to value all natural lengths in the hand instead of all artificial short suits. This is precisely what the 3 & 4 count does in a very simple manner. It's like trying to blow up a safe when the door was open all the time. Some excellent minds are so bent on being devious that, at times, they miss the simplest and the most obvious. Goren's count is an ingenious solution of the problem of valuation of declarer's hand. But it is a highly artificial solution. The mind dislikes carrying or remembering anything that is logically unnatural. Such a solution is of practical value only when no better solution is available. Now, with the new Three and Four formula, a simpler, more natural solution *is* available.

It may be objected, with some reason, that Goren's count should be judged not by its artificiality in declarer's hand (after all, his count is no less accurate than the new count) but by its performance in the two other, and even more important, divisions of trump valuation—the raising hand and declarer's revaluation. It will be shown specifically that the 3 & 4 count in responding hand and declarer's revaluation is not only more simple but considerably more accurate.

### Goren's and Other Counts in the Raising Hand

With the exception of the 3 & 4 count, all counts assign specific point values for doubletons, singletons, and voids. This is a principal feature of the Culbertson-Distributional Count of playing tricks, which the various authorities on point-counting have translated into their own point-count language. Each differs from the other in his estimate of the point values of short suits. And, at times, the differences are so wide that I cannot recognize my own child.

Take, for instance, the very important hand-pattern 4-4-3-2 in the raising hand. Solomon-Disbrow value a doubleton at 3 points. Goren values the identical doubleton at 1 point. This is quite a big difference of opinion, even for experts. One of the two experts must be wrong. Actually, both are wrong. This hand-pattern in support of partner's trump bid is worth 2 points, if the trump suit is headed by at least a Queen-ten; it is worth but 1 point with less. There are many other

differences between the various rival counts of distributional values.

I find, however, that Goren's count is less inaccurate than others. This is doubtless because, as he wrote: "The point count valuation for suit bidding, as I have developed it, is almost a literal translation of the playing trick table, with a few minor improvements." The "playing trick table" to which Goren so obliquely refers is the Culbertson Distributional Count which, together with the Culbertson Honor-Trick Table, has been a central feature of bidding valuation in contract bridge for a number of years. And, still is. The only difference today is that the immense complexities of short-suit valuation have been reduced to a remarkably simple formula of Three and Four.

Here is Goren's valuation of the raising hand. The words in quotes are taken from his *Point Count Bidding*. The formula is:

A. Count high cards at face value.

B. Count Short Suits:

Add 1 point for each doubleton

Add 3 points for each singleton

Add 5 points for a void

C. The Correction Points

Then come the correction points for flaws and the more general "judgment points."

1) "Promote an honor in partner's suit to the next rank . . .

"The following are holdings in partner's suit which should be promoted:

$$K \ x \ x = 4$$

$$Q \ J \ x = 4$$

$$Q \ x \ x = 3$$

$$J \ x \ x = 2$$

However, if you have already counted at least 4 points in trumps, no promotion takes place.\*

2) Deduct 1 point for only 3 trumps.

\* In the Culbertson Distributional Count (*Gold Book*, page 38), the matter is expressed more simply:

Add for K or Q J — 1 trick

Add for Q or J 10 — ½ trick

3) Deduct 1 point for 4-3-3-3 hand-pattern.

4) "A short suit containing an insufficiently guarded honor is a flaw." A "flaw" rates minus 1 point. He gives a list of doubletons with "a flaw":

A J alone	K J alone
K Q alone	Q x
Q J alone	J x

5) There is, finally, a special group which Goren calls JUDGMENT POINTS. "That is to say," he writes, "in these cases you use your own judgment."

### Complications and Fallacies

There are, thus, two Goren counts for short suits—one for the declarer's hand and one for the responder's hand. Goren claims that the difference between these two short-suit counts is "slight." It is evident to me that the difference is quite big, from the standpoint of valuation. As for simplicity, a simple comparison with the count of Three and Four will show how much more complicated is the Goren double count of short suits.

In the Culbertson count of Three and Four, the only difference between the valuation of declarer's opening suit-bids and the raising hand is that the point-count of a trump suit in declarer's hand starts after *four* trumps, instead of three. In all other cases, be it in declarer's or raising hand, in the trump or side suits (and that includes declarer's revaluation), the only figure to remember is Three. You simply add 1 point for each card after three cards, in any and all four-card or longer suits.\* Thus, with the new count, the mind carries only two figures, Three and Four; in Goren's double count of short suits the mind must carry six figures, two each for a doubleton, a singleton and a void.†

How about accuracy? In the raising hand there is a considerable

\* The only exception to this general Rule of Three is in the count of the 4-3-3-3 and 4-4-3-2 hand-patterns. See page 28.

† However, it is only when we come to the *third* Goren count—this time a startling count of long suits—that the Goren triple method of counting the distributional values becomes so complicated as to require the services of a Philadelphia lawyer. See page 50.

difference between the 3 & 4 count and the Goren count (1-3-5). Either one or the other is wrong; both cannot be right. All I can do here is give facts for the judgment of the players. Here are some of the facts:

The fallacy of a promoted honor. Goren adds one point for a "promoted" honor: a Jack, a Queen or a King; but he does not add anything for an Ace or a K-J-x. One either assigns an extra point value to all honors or to none: to do otherwise, as Goren does, is to get oneself into absurd situations. For instance,

- |    |           |           |       |         |
|----|-----------|-----------|-------|---------|
| 1. | ♠ A x x x | ♥ Q x x x | ♦ x x | ♣ x x x |
| 2. | ♠ K x x x | ♥ Q x x x | ♦ x x | ♣ x x x |

On Goren's count the first hand is identical with the second—they count 7 points each! This is *reductio ad absurdum*. In explanation, Goren writes that an Ace is "a general" and should not be promoted. Therefore, Goren, following his own logic, demotes the Ace.

Goren's peculiar promotion of honors leads to dangerous raises with the most frequent type of distribution, the 4-4-3-2. For instance, your partner opens with one spade and you hold:

♠ Q x x x    ♥ Q x x x    ♦ x x x    ♣ x x

On the 3 & 4 count your hand counts 5 points: 4 points for high cards, plus 1 point for the side length (you do not value the trump length, since it is headed by less than Queen-ten). With 5 points you are 1 point short of a minimum raise and therefore you pass; or with a careful partner, bid one notrump. The hand is too balanced to justify a "shaded" raise with 5 points. On Goren's count you have 6 points: 5 points for two Queens and 1 point for the doubleton. You therefore have a raise. It is a dangerous raise. Even minimum raises should have some substance to them and there is not much substance to two Queens. The minimum raise would be a hand like this:

♠ Q x x x    ♥ K x x x    ♦ x x x    ♣ x x

On the count of 3 & 4, this hand has 6 points in support of an opening spade bid and warrants a single minimum raise. On Goren's count, the hand has 7 points—obviously in excess of its real value. The following hand is considerably stronger:

♠ K J x x    ♥ Q x x x    ♦ x x x    ♣ x x

One reason is that with its strong trump support this hand can often

be played in "reversed dummy": the declarer's hand becomes the dummy and its trumps are utilized for ruffs. And yet Goren gives it exactly the same value as the previous hand.

In support of an opening spade bid Goren's count gives 7 points (same as with Aces, a K-J-x is not promoted). On the 3 & 4 count the hand is valued at 8 points, 6 points for high cards plus 1 point for the side length and plus 1 point for the four-card trump length. And it is worth 8 points, no more, but no less.

**Goren's chronic underbidding of the responding hand.** The second and more important defect of Goren's count for the trump raises lies in the gross underbidding that takes place whenever the responding hand holds five or six trumps in partner's suit. For instance, your partner opens with one spade, his left opponent passes, and you hold:

♠ 10 9 6 4 2      ♥ K 5 4      ♦ 8 7 2      ♣ 7 4

On Goren's count, you must unconditionally pass your partner's opening bid of one spade.

Goren counts but 4 points: 3 points for the King, 1 point for the doubleton, and nothing, but exactly nothing, for the five trumps in the dummy. Since 4 points is below even the shaded requirement for a single raise, most players would dutifully pass. Since Goren is a splendid player, I am sure his bridge instinct will make him raise on this hand—Goren method or no Goren method.

On the 3 & 4 count the hand has 5 points: 3 points for the King and 2 points for the fourth and fifth trump. 5 points with five trumps is a justifiable shaded raise.

The hand-pattern 5-3-3-2 is the second most common in bridge (16% of frequency). There are thousands of hands with five trumps and a doubleton in support of partner's trump bid. On the 3 & 4 count, this hand-pattern is always worth 2 distributional points; on the Goren count, it is always worth 1 distributional point—a difference of 100%.

By the Distributional Count for playing tricks (by Goren's own admission the model for his point-count), the 5-3-3-2 hand-pattern is worth two distributional tricks, one trick for the doubleton and one trick for the five-card trump length in the dummy. Thus, either Goren or I must be 100% wrong in our point valuation of these important hands. The reader can find out for himself by asking any real expert player whether he would pass partner's trump bid with five trumps and

a King. My experience is that a pass with five trumps and a King is suicidal.

The difference between the Goren and 3 & 4 valuation is even greater with another series of hands which also play an important part in winning bridge. Take, for instance, the hand-pattern 6-3-2-2, i.e., six trumps in the dummy, a three-card suit and two doubletons. With this or a similar type of hand (such as 6-3-3-1) Goren manages to underbid by no less than 3 points, every time the situation arises.

For instance,

♠ 10 9 7 6 4 2    ♥ Q 10 4    ♦ 8 7    ♣ 7 4

Your partner opens with 1 spade, his left opponent passes, and you hold the above hand. Playing the Goren count you must pass! You have only 4 points: 2 points for a Queen and 1 each for the two doubletons. Very bad. On the 3 & 4 count you have 7 points: 2 points for the Queen, plus 3 distributional points and 2 extra points for a six-card trump suit. The difference between the Goren and the 3 & 4 counts is 75%. Somebody is 75% wrong. This is disastrous, for beginners or average players, for I cannot imagine any advanced player refusing to raise on this hand.

One may object that very weak hands of this type are rather rare and the weakness of the Goren count here would be neutralized by the superiority of the count with stronger hands. Let's see:

♠ 10 9 7 6 4 2    ♥ Q 10 4    ♦ K x    ♣ 7 4

Suppose your partner opens with one spade. His left opponent overcalls with two clubs. What should you do with the above hand on Goren's count? You should pass—pass even if your partner strangles you, because this is the only response you are permitted to make by a higher authority than your partner. The minimum Goren requirement for a free raise is 8 points. You have only 7 points: 5 high-card points and 2 distributional points for the two doubletons. True, you have a six-card trump suit but in the Goren method of valuation any trump length in the dummy—five cards, six cards, or even seven cards—is constitutionally pointless. On the 3 & 4 count the hand is valued at 10 points: 5 in high cards and 5 distributional points. Not only can it make a free raise, it will bid at least twice.

Of course, the last thing that Charlie Goren himself will do is to pass on this juicy hand with an impregnable trump suit. But those who play his count will have to be more obedient. The percentage of frequency of the 6-3-2-2 and 6-3-3-1 hand-pattern is 9%, almost as common as the 4-3-3-3 hand-pattern. This percentage added to the 5-3-3-2 hand-pattern is almost one-third of all the possible hands in bridge. Every time that the responder holds five trumps or more, he will disastrously underbid, losing in the long run a slue of games and slams. He will, furthermore, be too timid to make sacrifice bids on this type of hand which is ideal for sacrifice bidding, facilitating games and slams for the opponents.

### The Mathematical Fallacy

It can be said truthfully that no point-count method is perfect and that one can always bring up isolated examples of defects in any method, including the 3 & 4 count. However, it is one thing to suffer from minor defects and it is quite another thing to suffer from such wide and deep wounds as in the case of Goren's count in the raising hand.

The severe and chronic underbidding in the Goren count is not a case of isolated hands or exceptions: The defects are inherent in the count itself. They arise from the fundamental mathematical fallacy that is at the base of the Goren valuation in responding hand. *The mathematical fallacy that Goren committed is to base his valuation of the responding hand on the count of short suits only.* You can have an accurate method of valuation based on the count of long suits only, in which the count of short suits is automatically included; this is the method we use in the 3 & 4 count. Or you can have an accurate method of valuation based on a *separate* count of long suits and short suits; this is the method we use in the Distributional Count of playing tricks. You cannot have an accurate point-count method based solely on the valuation of short suits in the responding hand; this is a mathematical fallacy which cripples the Goren count in a number of important situations.

### How to Make the Goren Count More Accurate

The Goren count for opening bids is, in the main, as accurate as the 3 & 4 count. In the responding hand the Goren count for trump raises,

as I pointed out, is both complicated and inaccurate. It could be made nearly as accurate as the 3 & 4 count by correcting Goren's fallacy of promoted honors and by reintroducing the valuation of five-card or longer trump suits. I feel it would be advisable to do so because a number of players who prefer point-count valuation are accustomed to the Goren count. We would have no objection to its use in the Culbertson System as an optional feature, provided some of its basic defects were removed. Accordingly, the following are the improvements of the Goren count which we recommend to players.

### **The Improved Goren Count**

(For the Raising Hand in Trump Bids)

1. Add 1 point for a trump Queen, King or Ace. Do not add anything for a Jack.
2. Add 1 point for each card over 4 in the trump suit.
3. Count a void as 4 points (instead of 5). Retain the Goren count of 1 point for a doubleton and 3 points for a singleton.

With these simple improvements, the Goren count will come very close to the degree of accuracy of the 3 & 4 count. A few other suggestions to make the Goren count even more accurate could be made. But, as Charlie Goren says, it is better to sacrifice a degree of accuracy for the sake of greater simplicity. I agree, provided the "degree of accuracy" is within the reasonable limits of accuracy.

### **Goren's Revaluation of Declarer's Trump Suit**

(The Third Goren Count)

The first Goren count is the valuation of declarer's opening suit-bid, based on the one-two-three count of the short suits. The second Goren count deals with the valuation of the responding hand in support of partner's trump bid, based on the one-three-five count of short suits.

The reader travels through many and many pages of Goren's book,



*Point Count Bidding*, in the comfortable delusion that these two distributional counts (plus the 4-3-2-1 count of high cards), is all he needs to know to become an expert valuator. He is impressed by the elimination of long-suit valuation and charmed by the simplicity of Goren's two short-suit counts. At times he is assured by hints from the author that the double-count is so simple and withal so precise as to do some of the thinking for the player.

Then, as the reader nears the end of the book, he suddenly discovers on page 75 that there exists a Goren count No. 3, without which the counts No. 1 and No. 2 are of little value! Furthermore, count No. 3 revives the valuation of long suits originally buried by counts No. 1 and No. 2. And the reader discovers to his dismay that the revival of the long-suit valuation is done with a vengeance—with a formula so complicated as to rival the progression of some Monte Carlo system to beat roulette. Here is the formula quoted from Goren's book. The lines in caps are also his.

“WHEN PARTNER RAISES YOUR SUIT, ADD  
AN ADDITIONAL POINT FOR THE FIFTH TRUMP  
AND 2 ADDITIONAL POINTS FOR THE SIXTH,  
AND EACH SUBSEQUENT TRUMP.

“I'm sorry to have to burden your memory with this one, but it's indispensable if you want to value your hand properly.”

On the next page Goren apologizes again:

“We apologize for adding this to the long string of figures you must commit to memory, but there is this bit of news that will be relished by the tired businessman: we have no more tables of values to offer you.” This is true, since Goren approaches the end of the book.

Charlie Goren is quite right in apologizing for adding this formula to the long string of previous figures. It is not a string; it is a rope. And he is also right in stating that the count of long suits is *indispensable* for the proper valuation of a hand. Bidding valuation of a trump suit has two phases: In the first phase, the opener values his trump suit on a minimum basis; in the second phase, the opener must revalue his trump suit when partner has raised it and a trump fit has thereby been established. Goren's No. 1 and No. 2 counts apply to the first half of bidding valuation; the No. 3 count applies to the second half. Without

this No. 3 count, the No. 1 and No. 2 counts would be largely useless. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that Goren's No. 3 count (based exclusively on long suits) is an admission of defeat. It emphasizes toward the end of the book what should have been obvious at the start of the book: that bidding valuation by any method is impossible without including some method of valuation of long suits.

Perhaps it is better late than never. Unfortunately, so much emphasis was placed on the No. 1 and No. 2 counts and so completely were the long suits ignored that now, with the apparition of the No. 3 count on top of the No. 1 and No. 2, the whole thing looks like a saddle on a cow. The looks could be forgiven if it were not for the fact that count No. 3 is, in conjunction with counts No. 1 and No. 2, of vast complexity and confusion. It is also inaccurate, at times, to the point of absurdity. Let's take, for instance, the hand-pattern 7-2-2-2 in the opener's hand. To make it easy, the hand below is given in little crosses without any high cards, i.e., pure distributional values by Goren's No. 3 count.

♠ x x x x x x x      ♥ x x      ♦ x x      ♣ x x

Now, suppose you have enough high cards (say, spade A K and heart A) to open with one spade. Your partner raises to two spades. You now revalue your trump suit according to Goren count No. 3. Look closely at those seven spade crosses and three doubletons, for it's not going to be easy. First, you have 1 point for each of 3 doubletons = 3 distributional points. Now you have to unravel the 7-card suit length by a special progression, 1 point + 2 + 2 = 5 points. 5 points + 3 (don't forget the doubletons) = 8 points, which is the total value in distributional points in your hand. This shows how complicated is the formula—in fact, every time a declarer holds a six-card or longer suit he has to pause for a considerable time (and thereby tip off the opponents) to revalue his trump suit alone.

By the 3 & 4 count the 7-3-2-2 hand-pattern is valued, almost at a glance, by counting 4 points for the four cards over three and adding 2 extra points, which gives you a total count of 6 distributional points. The eight-card suit is valued by the same method at 7 points.

In conclusion, the new 3 & 4 distributional count is mathematically more exact and in practice more simple than any other method so far devised. It has two revolutionary features: It does away with separate short-suit valuation in any hand once and for all; and by the ingenious formula of 3 & 4 it values *all* hand distributions. It can be learned easily and it really does much of the automatic thinking for the players.

Better than ten thousand hands is the table below. It will give at a glance a view of all the principal bridge hands, from the standpoint of distributional values. At the same time, it will enable the reader to compare scientifically the 3 & 4 count with Goren's or with any other count and thus judge for himself.

### Point-Count Analysis of Distributional Values

HAND-PATTERN	FREQUENCIES	DECLARER		RAISER		DECLARER'S REVALUATION	
		3 & 4 Count	Goren	3 & 4 Count	Goren	3 & 4 Count	Goren
4-4-3-2	22%	1	1	1	1	1	1
4-3-3-3	10%	0	0	—1	—1	0	0
4-4-4-1	3%	2	2	3	3	3	2
5-3-3-2	16%	1	1	2	1	2	2
5-4-3-1	13%	2	2	3	3	3	3
5-4-2-2	11%	2	2	3	2	3	3
5-5-2-1	3%	3	3	4	4	4	4
6-3-2-2	6%	2	2	5	2	5	5
6-4-2-1	5%	3	3	6	4	6	6
6-3-3-1	3%	2	2	5	3	5	5
7-3-2-1	1.80%	3	3	6	4	6	8
7-2-2-2	0.50%	3	3	6	3	6	8
FREAK TWO-SUITERS (two singletons or a void. The only three-suiter is 5-4-4-0)							
5-4-4-0	1.20%	3	3	5	5	4	4
5-5-3-0	0.90%	3	3	5	5	4	4
6-4-3-0	1.30%	3	3	7	5	6	6
6-5-1-1	0.70%	4	4	8	6	7	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>98.40%</b>					

Note 1: Hand-patterns with a singleton are unbalanced; without a singleton are balanced.

Note 2: The remaining 1.60% of hand-patterns is made up either of single-suited freaks (8-cards or longer) or of two-suited super-freaks that are but an extension of the freaks.

Note 3: The occurrence of the unusual and freak hand-patterns is considerably more frequent than indicated by their mathematical probabilities. Unavoidably imperfect shuffle is one of the reasons. (See Law of Symmetry in the GOLD BOOK.)

## A Reply

Charlie Goren chose a relatively unimportant issue—the question of a rebid by the opener—to launch an oblique attack on things (and persons) he does not like in bridge. To prove his point, he takes a roundabout way which permits him to swat his pretended hate—the honor-trick. On page 1 of his recent *Contract Bridge Complete*, he buries the valiant honor-trick without military honors: “For many years,” he writes, “the Honor Trick Table has been given top billing. But it will be seen that time marches on, and the honor trick, after 20 years of service, (sic!), is gradually being forced out of business.” Since Charlie Goren is quite bright my only conclusion is that, when he writes such arrant nonsense, he hopes to impress the innocents. For sixteen years Mr. Goren taught the honor-trick method and the Culbertson System from which he has profited greatly. Now, with or without honors and tricks, Mr. Goren is still teaching the Culbertson System—for there is no other that he plays.

Having solemnly warned the 90 percent of bridge players throughout the world who are still addicted to the honor-trick (not to mention the playing trick), Mr. Goren cites a horrible example of “honorism” on page 4 of the same book. He writes:

“You deal and hold:

♠ A K J x      ♥ x x x      ♦ A x x      ♣ x x x

“Our Pilgrim Fathers, assaying this hand, would have found that it contained 3-plus honor tricks and a biddable suit. The impulse to bid would therefore have been irresistible. When partner responded to the Spade bid with 2 Hearts, the fun was over. No rebid was available that made a grain of sense.”

Then Mr. Goren, having described with relish other unpleasant consequences of the stupidity of the Pilgrim Fathers,\* concludes triumphantly:

“This situation should have been foreseen, and the solution would have been found in an original pass. Observe how the point count would have done their thinking for

\* For those not in the know, Pilgrim Fathers are only one Father—Ely Culbertson. Charlie Goren himself is not exactly a cockerel and could well qualify as an assistant Pilgrim Father.

them. This hand is worth only 12 points, and such hands must not be opened unless they contain a good 5-card suit, to provide a convenient rebid."

Let me quote from page 110 of my "Gold Book," 1937 edition (also present edition): "If there were not too many important exceptions one could state as a general rule that no hand should be opened *if it does not contain a rebid* (italicized in the book), however slight. For instance,

♠ A K 6 5      ♥ 7 6 4      ♦ A 5 3      ♣ 9 4 2

"If one spade is bid on this hand, and partner responds with two of any other suit, the opener could not safely raise, rebid his spade suit, or bid two notrump. A pass on this hand is therefore preferable."

It would appear that by a strange coincidence the hand used by Goren on page 4 of his latest book is, except for the ♠ J, identical with the hand I used in 1937. (The coincidence may not be strange, because in 4-3-3-3 distribution the choice of hands of this type is limited.) Only (and this is most unfortunate), while advancing the same argument and a virtually identical hand, which I used *against* opening the bidding on 3 H.T. (12 points) without a rebid, he evades the real point of this hand. The real point is that there are two kinds of rebids: a) a good rebiddable trump suit and b) a safe rebid at the level of one (usually after a club bid). In other words, it's the "escapability" that matters.

If I may be permitted to re-doctor Charlie Goren's hand, we shall have the following:

1. ♠ A K J x      ♥ x x x      ♦ x x x      ♣
2. ♠ A K J x      ♥ x x x      ♦ A x x      ♣ x x x

Each hand is worth only 12 points. Neither hand contains "a good five-card suit." Therefore Goren would pass them both. I would pass on Goren's (ex-Culbertson's) hand No. 2 and I would bid one club on hand No. 1. The hand does not contain a "good five-card suit, to provide a convenient rebid." And yet, no self-respecting Pilgrim Father would fail to open on this hand. I doubt if Charlie Goren would pass it. Any time you can show your partner 3 + honor-tricks (12 points) *with relative impunity*, do it, Goren or no Goren.

In the hand in question your proper opening bid is one club. If your partner responds with one diamond or one heart, you come back with one spade, still keeping the bidding at the safe level of one. If partner

bids one notrump, you drop the bidding. The chances of your partner's giving a single raise to two clubs are relatively small and generally indicate a special type of weakness with at least four clubs. Even if you might have trouble with the club suit and occasionally suffer a loss, it is still a better bid than a pass. With hands containing 3 or 3+ honor tricks (12 points) there is always a danger that the deal will be passed out. Your *visible* losses from bidding early will be relatively insignificant compared to your *invisible* losses from passing. Suppose with the hand No. 1 you and opponents pass and your partner in the fourth position holds:

♠ Q x x x x      ♥ x      ♦ x x      ♣ K Q x x x

He will also pass, and a game will be lost.



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## **Book II**

### **Expert Bidding with the Point-Count**

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## CHAPTER 7

# Opening One-Notrump Bids and Responses

### VALUATION TABLE FOR OPENING NOTRUMP BIDS

Ace	= 4 points
King	= 3 points
Queen	= 2 points
Jack	= 1 point
Total Points in the Deck	= 40
Average Hand	= 10

Only the count for honors (A, K, Q, and J) is used in computing opening one-notrump bids. However, when partner raises in notrump, if opener's hand contains a five-card suit, an extra point's credit should be taken. An extra point should also be added for all four Aces.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR OPENING BIDS OF ONE NOTRUMP

1. 16-18 points in high cards
2. A balanced distribution; that is,  
4-3-3-3  
4-4-3-2  
5-3-3-2  
6-3-2-2 (exceptionally)
3. Three suits must be protected, and the minimum holding in a doubleton suit is Q x.

1. This represents a hand containing from about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Sixteen points is a good hand in high cards, and should offer ample protection for the opener except under extremely adverse circumstances. Hands counting 19-21 are too strong for a one-notrump bid and should be opened with one of a suit so that a game will not be missed. A raise for one notrump is 8 points, whereas a suit-bid will

be kept open with 6, and sometimes even 5 points; accordingly, if a 19-point hand is opened with one notrump, partner will pass with 7 points, thereby missing a game.

2. Hands containing a singleton should not be opened at notrump. (A semi-two-suiter—5-4-2-2 distribution—is also undesirable.) There are two reasons for this: first, unless partner turns out to be quite strong in the suit, the singleton represents a menace: an opponent's five-card suit is likely to be quickly established; and second, such unbalanced hands are well adapted to suit play if a satisfactory trump suit can be found. Such hands may, and frequently do, eventually land at notrump; but first, suit possibilities should be explored via an opening bid in a suit.

*Examples:*

♠ A 7 2 (4)    ♥ A Q 4 (6)    ♦ J 5 3 2 (1)    ♣ K Q 6 (5)  
Total: 16 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks, a minimum holding. Or

♠ A 4 3 2 (4)    ♥ A K 6 (7)    ♦ Q J 5 (3)    ♣ A 4 3 (4)  
Total: 18 points or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks, a maximum holding.

## Responses

Count honors at face value (4-3-2-1). Take an added point when raising partner in notrump for a five-card suit headed by Q-10, K, or better. (See page 64 for six-card or longer suits.)

26 points in the combined hands will produce a favorable play for game

33 points in the combined hands will produce a favorable play for small slam

37 points in the combined hands will produce a favorable play for grand slam

## 25-Point Hands

Twenty-six points will normally produce a better-than-even play for game. But even 25 points will frequently produce game, with favorable breaks in the play. Normally, 25 points offers a less-than-even play for game—say 37%-40%. Therefore, the loss in reaching game with 25 points is never great; in fact, when both sides are vulnerable it is defi-

nately advantageous to bid game with 25 points, since the rubber bonus is 500 points.

In the Culbertson System there are no rescue bids.\* Consequently, any response shows some strength. Even the "sign-off," an apparent exception (see page 64 under six-card suits), requires some honor strength in addition to a six-card suit.

Eight points are required for a suit response to one notrump; either 8 points in high cards, or at least 6 points in high cards plus distributional credits.

With less strength, the proper procedure is to pass, because the combined hands at best will have a doubtful play for game:  $7 + 18$  (maximum holding) equals only 25.

### Raises in Notrump

Raises are given only with balanced hands (hands which do not contain a singleton).

*Bids for game*—With 8-9 points—raise to two notrump  
With 10-14 points—raise to three notrump

*Bids for slam* —With 15-16 points—raise to four notrump  
With 17-18 points—raise to six notrump  
With 19-20 points—bid three in a suit,  
then six notrump  
With 21 points—raise to seven notrump

Game bidding at notrump is very simple. With less than 8 points, the partnership cannot have 26 points. Therefore, pass. With 8 or 9 points, the partnership may or may not have 26 points. Therefore, bid two notrump. Partner will pass with 16, but with 17 or 18 will bid three notrump. In the worst event the partnership lands in three notrump with 25 points.

With 10-14 points, the partnership should definitely be in game ( $10 + 16 = 26$ ), but cannot have a slam ( $14 + 18 =$  only 32); consequently three notrump is the bid, and this should always close the auction.

With 15 or 16 points in responder's hand—about a minimum notrump opening in itself—there is no slam if partner has a minimum. Four notrump is the response, inviting a slam. Partner passes with 16

\* Except where partner has been doubled.

(16 + 16 = only 32); with 18 he bids six notrump; and with 17 he bids five notrump.

With a biddable five-card suit and 15-16 points, responder should bid three in the suit, followed by four notrump.

With 17 or 18, a small slam should be bid (17 + 16 = 33). But there is no grand slam (18 + 18 = only 36). With a biddable five-card suit, bid three in the suit, followed by five notrump, offering partner a choice of contracts.

With 19 or 20, invite the grand slam by jumping in a suit, followed by six notrump. This is stronger than bidding six notrump directly, which should close the bidding.

With 21 points bid seven notrump (21 + 16 = 37).

These slam tables need not be memorized, because they are based on a definite principle, which can be easily applied by the player if he understands it.

Add your points to partner's minimum (16). If the total is 26 or more, 33 or more, or 37 or more, make sure of getting to the game or slam.

Add your points to partner's maximum (18). If the total is 26 or 27, 33 or 34, 37 or 38, invite partner to bid the game or slam.

Bid two notrump on the following 8- to 9-point hands:

1. ♠ A 6 3    ♥ 10 7 4 2    ♦ K J 5 4    ♣ 6 5

8 points or 1½ + honor-tricks.

2. ♠ Q 7 6    ♥ 4 3    ♦ K Q 6 4 2    ♣ 5 4 3

8 points (7 + 1) or 1 + honor-tricks.

3. ♠ J 5 4    ♥ K Q 3 2    ♦ 8 7    ♣ K 6 4 3

9 points or 1½ honor-tricks.

Bid three notrump on the following 10- to 14-point hands:

Hands 1 and 2 above, plus a Queen.

Hand 3 above, plus a Jack.

4. ♠ A 5 4    ♥ K Q 7 3    ♦ Q J 6 4    ♣ Q 5

14 points or 2½ + honor-tricks.

5. ♠ K 3 2    ♥ 6 5    ♦ 8 7 4    ♣ A Q 5 3 2

10 points or 2 honor-tricks.

Bid as indicated on the following 15- to 16-point hands:

6. ♠ A 7 2 ♥ K Q 6 5 ♦ Q J 4 3 ♣ K 6

15 points or 3 honor-tricks. Bid four notrump.

7. ♠ K Q 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ A Q 5 4 3

16 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three clubs, then four notrump.

Bid as indicated on the following 17- to 18-point hands:

8. ♠ A Q 7 ♥ K Q 5 3 ♦ Q J 6 4 ♣ K 8

17 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid six notrump.

9. ♠ K Q 4 ♥ A 6 ♦ Q 7 5 ♣ A Q 4 3 2

18 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid three clubs, then five notrump.

### Forcing Takeouts

With 12 points ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 honor-tricks) and a five-card suit, or 10 points and a six-card suit, or with a better hand, a jump bid of three in the suit is in order. This bid indicates a sure game and should also be employed when a slam is in view. This bid is forcing to game, but does not require as strong a hand as when partner opened in a suit, because here partner's hand is known to be better than a minimum, and in addition, a fit is assured.

Where a slam is in view, the forcing takeout is preferable to a jump in notrump because it is possible that the hands may play better in the suit. Also, partner will know that part of the announced strength is in length and strength of a suit and that, consequently, there may be the danger that the opponents have two Aces, if opener has only one Ace.

#### *Examples:*

♠ K Q 7 5 2 ♥ A 6 4 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ 5 3

13 points or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

♠ A 7 ♥ K Q 6 5 4 ♦ A Q J 2 ♣ 4 3

18 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

### Rebids by Opening Notrump Bidder

The opening notrump bidder has already indicated within narrow limits the strength of his hand. Consequently he should not take any further strenuous action but should show whether his bid is minimum

or maximum, show good support for partner's suit, or under certain circumstances show a four-card major suit.

With a maximum hand he should accept any invitation from partner for game or slam; with a minimum he should decline such invitations.

If partner makes a forcing takeout, opener may raise or bid three notrump, but he should not bid beyond game. A slam invitation should come from partner.

In the Culbertson System a minimum suit takeout is forcing for one round. Consequently the opener should respond as follows: he should show a biddable four-card major; with good support for partner's suit he may raise; with a maximum notrump and two of the three top honors (A K, A Q, or K Q) in partner's suit he may jump to three notrump or four in partner's major suit; if partner bid two in a minor, opener may bid three notrump with four to the Ace, King or Queen of partner's suit and a maximum hand; with other holdings he should bid two notrump. He may not pass.

### *Examples:*

The bidding went one notrump—two spades. Holding:

♠ A 6 5    ♥ K 7 5 4    ♦ A Q 4 3    ♣ A 6

17 points or 4 honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

♠ K Q 6    ♥ K J 5    ♦ A Q 4 2    ♣ Q J 7

18 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

♠ Q J 5 4    ♥ K 6    ♦ A Q J 3    ♣ K Q 2

18 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

The bidding went one notrump—two diamonds. Holding:

♠ K Q 3 2    ♥ A 5    ♦ Q 7 5    ♣ A J 6 4

16 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid two spades.

♠ K Q 2    ♥ A 7    ♦ Q 5 4 3    ♣ A J 6 3

16 points or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

♠ K Q 6    ♥ A J 5    ♦ A 4 3 2    ♣ K J 7

18 points or 4 honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

## Responding with Six-Card Suits

When we come to responding with six- or seven-card suits we are really in the realm of suit bidding rather than notrump bidding. In

suit bidding it is not sufficient merely to assign a definite value to each high card; a substantial number of points must also be credited for distributional values.

For purposes of bidding your own six-card suit in response to a notrump bid, count it as 4 points for length, thus:

$$\begin{aligned}\spadesuit 976532 &= 4 \text{ points} \\ \clubsuit KJ8643 &= 8 \text{ points } (4 + 4)\end{aligned}$$

This is counting the suit as though partner had raised it; for when partner has made an opening notrump bid you can assume that he has trump support for your suit. Under the 3 & 4 count, you therefore count 1 point for each card over *three* and add 2 points for the six-card suit (Declarer's Revaluation, page 25), making a total of 5 points; but you deduct 1 point because partner cannot be assumed to have more than three-card trump support. This leaves 4 points as the net value of the suit.

Similarly a seven-card suit may be counted as 5 points for length, in addition to its high cards.

Holding:

$$\spadesuit 87 \quad \heartsuit 753 \quad \diamondsuit AK6532 \quad \clubsuit 73$$

the correct bid over one notrump is three notrump. Seven points in high cards, plus 4 for the six-card suit, makes 11. Added to partner's minimum of 16, this insures the necessary 26 points. Another example would be:

$$\spadesuit 64 \quad \heartsuit A73 \quad \diamondsuit QJ6542 \quad \clubsuit 86$$

This also totals 11 points. If the suits in these hands were majors, a response of two in the suit would be correct. Partner's next bid would then indicate whether game should be bid in the major suit or notrump. (Remember, in the Culbertson System a response of two in a suit is forcing for one round.)

A six-card suit opposite a notrump is always worth 4 points if played in that suit; but if played at notrump a suit must obviously be establishable to be worth this credit; that is, it must be possible for declarer to run it eventually. Note that the suits in the examples above fulfil this condition. When the suit is weak and entries are absent or insufficient, the long suit becomes a sheer gamble at notrump, and success will depend on partner's length and strength in the suit and on the



way the suit breaks. Such suits should be valued for notrump play at only 1, 2 or 3 added points, depending on the probability of success in running the suit.

♠ K 7 6 4 3 2   ♥ 6 5 3   ♦ 8 7   ♣ 6 4

7 points, but only at spades, as the suit may not come in at notrump. Pass.

With six spades to the K-J, however (8 points at spades), two spades should be bid; over two notrump, the bid is then three spades, which is a signoff and urges partner to pass. Partner must pass, not having been strong enough to bid game on the previous round.

With less than 8 points, passing is the best procedure. It is better to take the loss at one notrump than court worse trouble by attempting to rescue.

Here are some examples of suits which may not be establishable at notrump when responder has no outside entry:

1. A x x x x x. If partner holds K-x, K-Q, or K-J, the suit cannot be run. If partner has three cards in the suit it can be run ordinarily, but the play may require giving up a trick as a safety play to insure its run. Count the suit-length at only 2 points—6 points in all.

2. A J x x x x. This is a little better. There is a chance to run the suit even though partner has a doubleton. Count 3 points—a total of 8 points for notrump, 9 for the suit-bid. Bid two in the suit and rebid three on the next round—a signoff.

3. A Q x x x x. Partner's minimum holding is K-x or J-x-x, consequently the suit may be considered establishable. The slight risk that opponents can stop it must be taken. 10 points for notrump. Bid two in the suit, followed by three notrump.

Very weak six-card suits, headed by a Jack or lower card, are not worth quite 4 points for notrump, even with several re-entries, because of the time which may be required to establish them. Before they can be run there is a good chance the opponents will have established their own suit.

With other six- and seven-card suits, a player must decide in a similar manner how good is the chance of running them, and discount their value accordingly for notrump play.

A seven-card suit to a Q-J: 8 points—3 for the Q-J and 5 for seven cards—is strong enough to bid over partner's one notrump. Then it should be rebid at the three-level as a signoff.

## Slam Bidding

With no long suit, or only a five-card suit, it is possible to bid slams very accurately on point-count alone. But when the responding hand has a six- or seven-card suit this is no longer the case. With no long suit, the total value of all points is 40. Consequently, the more points held by your side, the less are left for your opponents; all they can have is what is left out of the 40 points. So if you have 33 points, they cannot hold two Aces (8 points).

With a six- or seven-card suit this is no longer true. If you take 4 or 5 points for your suit, the opponents may hold 11 or 12 points, possibly including two Aces. On the other hand, simply to disregard the suit and take no credit for its length, would result in missing many slams.

This type of slam bidding is actually not notrump bidding but suit bidding, which is covered in detail later on (Chapter 15).

In order to bid a slam in suit bidding, the following requirements must be met in addition to the required count (33 points). Either the trump suit must be solid, and two first and one second-round control must be held in other suits; or the trump suit may have one loser, if the other three first-round controls are held.

Therefore, in bidding slams with long suits, both the opening bidder and the responder must be control-conscious. They must realize that the *particular* cards they hold may be as important as how much they count. Without an Ace, the responder should slightly discount his values. When the opening one-notrump bidder has only one Ace, or a two or three-notrump bidder only two Aces, he should be reluctant to bid a slam when partner has indicated a long suit by his rebidding of it.

Because of the great advantage of using the call of four notrump as simply a *raise* in notrump, it is inadvisable to use the Blackwood Convention after an opening notrump bid. In place of it, the bid of four clubs—the Gerber Convention—is recommended. This convention is as follows:

### The Gerber Convention

In response to an opening one, two or three notrump, a bid of four clubs asks partner to show Aces. The responses are: Four diamonds shows *no* Ace; four hearts, one Ace; four spades, two Aces; four no-

trump, three Aces; and five clubs, four Aces. If the four-club bidder finds that his side has all the Aces, and the bidding has not ruled out the possibility of a grand slam, he may indicate to his partner the possession of all four Aces and simultaneously ask for Kings by bidding the suit (or notrump) next higher than his partner's last bid. If his partner, in response to four clubs, should bid four hearts and the four-club bidder's suit is spades, he can bid four spades followed by five spades, if he has only one Ace. Partner must then pass.

### *Examples of Slam Bidding:*

Partner bids one notrump, and you hold:

♠ 8   ♥ A Q 7 4   ♦ K Q 6 5 3 2   ♣ 5 4

This hand, at suit valuation, has a value of 16 points opposite partner's notrump: 11 points in high cards, 4 for the six-card suit, and 1 for the second suit of four cards. There may be a slam, therefore, if partner has 17 or 18 points rather than 16.

The suggested bid is three diamonds, followed by four hearts. The forcing bid, followed by the reverse at the four-level, will strongly indicate slam possibilities. From here on partner must take over the decision. This decision should depend more on the particular cards he holds than on his exact point-count. He knows that responder's strong bidding is based partly on distribution, and that Aces in the off-suits, spades and clubs, are much more desirable than Kings, Queens, and Jacks. Holding the following hand, 18 points ( $3\frac{1}{2} +$  honor-tricks):

♠ K Q 6   ♥ K 5 3   ♦ A 6 4   ♣ K Q J 5

he should bid four notrump. This is not a slam try, but suggests that partner should either pass or go to five diamonds. The great second- and third-round strength in spades and clubs is not likely to be valuable to partner; it suggests the dreaded duplication of values.

Another example:

♠ K Q 6   ♥ K 5 3   ♦ A 6 4   ♣ A 5 4 2

This hand is not unfavorable for a slam, with two Aces and the King of hearts, but it has only 16 points, so five diamonds is opener's best guess over responder's four hearts.

♠ A J 5   ♥ K 4 2   ♦ A 6 3   ♣ A 5 4 3

Opener should bid six diamonds. Though he has a minimum in

points, he has just the right cards for a slam. The three Aces guarantee complete control of the hand. Give opener the Jack of hearts, instead of the Jack of spades, and the slam bid is even more obvious.

♠ K Q 6   ♥ K 5 3   ♦ A 7 4   ♣ A Q 6 2

With this—18 points, 4 honor-tricks—opener should bid five notrump. This asks partner to take a choice between notrump and diamonds for the slam. A maximum notrump with two Aces indicates a favorable play for slam.

Note that in this example the direct method of slam bidding is used. The use of the four-club bid by responder, asking for Aces, is not correct here, because the partnership may have three Aces but only 32 points (16 plus 16)—not sufficient for a slam. The use of the four-club bid here might result in reaching an unmakeable slam if partner held two Aces but only 16 points. The eventual decision on the hand should be left to partner.

Responder holds:

♠ 8   ♥ K 9 5 3 (5)   ♦ K Q J 6 4 2 (10)   ♣ K 8 (3)

13 points in high cards, but 18 points, taking proper long-suit credits. The partnership has 29-31 points in high cards but at least 34 in playing strength. Consequently four clubs should be bid immediately, asking for Aces. Three Aces will insure a good play for six. There is probably no grand slam, because if partner has all four Aces he cannot have the Queen of hearts. (This would be 19 points.)

It may appear to the reader that the point-count is defective because it is quite possible that 33 or more points may not produce a slam. Actually, 33 points always indicate the *probability* of twelve tricks. But it is a paradox in bridge that one side may have twelve or thirteen tricks and still take only ten or eleven. That side's tricks are taken only after the opponents have cashed their tricks.

### Responding with Unbalanced Hands

We have seen that unbalanced hands (hands containing a singleton) should not be opened at notrump. It is equally true that a raise in notrump should not be given with an unbalanced hand. The reason for this is that an unbalanced hand is much better adapted to suit play. The singleton, so frequently a menace at notrump, is an asset at a sound

suit contract. It assures that at most one trick can be won by opponents in that suit, as compared with a possible four, five, or even six tricks at notrump. This does not mean that such hands may not eventually play at notrump; it does mean, however, that an effort should first be made to fit them up at a suit contract, and that partner should be warned about a possible weakness at notrump.

The principle should also be followed where partner's notrump call is not an *opening* bid. With a singleton do not raise the notrump—show an unbalanced hand by making some other call. A player will save many thousands of points in a few months by following this principle.

The one important exception to this rule is where the singleton is in the suit-bid by partner. Here it may be right to raise the notrump, since the suit need no longer be considered very menacing.

A minimum of 8 points (including distributional points) is needed to justify a bid over partner's one notrump. With less, it is more prudent to leave him at a contract of one-odd, even if it is evident that a better contract of two in a suit is available. If the one notrump should be doubled, a run-out to two in the suit will clearly indicate weakness.

Where less than 6 points in high cards are held, notrump should never be raised, but the suit should be rebid at the three-level as a signoff. For instance, if partner bids one notrump and you hold:

♠ A J 6 5 3 2   ♥ 7 6 4   ♦ 8   ♣ 5 3 2

9 points, but only 5 in high cards, bid two spades. Over two notrump, rebid three spades.

With a five- or six-card minor suit and a singleton, bid that suit rather than raise notrump immediately. Holding:

♠ 8   ♥ J 6 4 3   ♦ A K 7 3 2   ♣ 5 4 2

9 points. Bid two diamonds. Partner may bid two hearts, or if he bids two spades, the worry about that suit is greatly reduced.

With a 4-4-4-1 distribution, bid two in the minor suit even though it is very weak. This permits partner to rebid two hearts or two spades. If he is able to do so, a good major-suit contract is assured. Holding:

♠ Q 7 6 4   ♥ A Q 5 3   ♦ 2   ♣ J 8 4 3

9 points. Bid two clubs.

♠ J 6 4 3   ♥ A J 5 2   ♦ 8   ♣ J 6 4 2

only 7 points. Pass.

## CHAPTER 8

# Opening Two- and Three-Notrump Bids and Responses

### Requirements

The count required for a two-notrump bid is 22 to 24 points (5 + 6 honor-tricks).

The count required for a three-notrump bid is 25 to 27 points (6 to 7 honor-tricks).

In both bids: 1. The hand must have balanced distribution. 2. All four suits should be protected.

♠ A Q 7   ♥ K Q 6   ♦ A J 10 5   ♣ A Q 2

22 points or 5 + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump. Without the Jack of diamonds, bid one diamond.

♠ A Q 7   ♥ K Q 6   ♦ A Q J 5   ♣ A Q 2

24 points or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump. With A K J 5 in diamonds in place of A Q J 5, the hand is worth 25 points or 6 + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

With a solid long suit and a tenaced position, an opening three-notrump bid may be made with 23 or 24 high-card points:

♠ K 2   ♥ A K 6   ♦ K 2   ♣ A K Q J 8 3

23 points or 5 + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

### Responses to Two-Notrump Bids

With 3-8 points, raise to three notrump.

$24 + 8 = 32$ , consequently with only 8 points there will be no slam.

Most writers give 4 points as the minimum for a raise. A moment's

consideration, however, will expose the fallacy of this requirement. If the responder passes with 3 points (a King, or a Queen and a Jack), he will stay out of three notrump when partner has 22 points and the partnership, 25—a dubious advantage, as 25-point hands often make game. But he will *miss* an odds-on play for game if his partner has 23 or 24 points, giving the partnership 26 or 27 points respectively. Missed games spell missed opportunities—at least in rubber bridge—which only too frequently do not recur.

With a five-card major and 3 points in high cards, or any six-card major, show the major, especially with unbalanced distribution. With a minor suit, don't bother to bid it unless there is the possibility of a slam.

With more than 8 points, a slam will be a possibility or a certainty. The principle for reaching a slam is the same as after a one-notrump bid. Add your points to partner's minimum and maximum, 22 and 24. If the first sum is 33 or 37, you can bid a small or a grand slam. If the sum is below these levels, add your points to your partner's maximum (24). If this total is 33 or 37, invite the slam, and partner will decide whether it should be bid or not. The table of responses derived from this principle follows:

With 9-10 points, bid four notrump. Partner should bid six with 24, five with 23, and pass with 22.

With 11-12 points, bid six notrump.

With 13-14 points, invite seven by bidding three in a suit, then jumping to six notrump.

With 15 points, bid seven notrump.

### Responses to Three-Notrump Openings

Any bid over an opening three notrump should be construed as a slam try (though the bid of four spades or hearts is the mildest sort of try, as it denies the ability to bid five).

Show a five-card suit, with 5 points in high cards.

♠ K 10 6 5 4    ♥ Q 7 3    ♦ 7 4 3    ♣ 7 2

Bid four spades.

With 6-7 points, bid four notrump.

With 8-9 points, bid six notrump.

With 10-11 points, bid four diamonds (an artificial bid), then six

notrump. NOTE: Four spades or four hearts might be passed, and four clubs asks for Aces.

With 12 points, bid seven notrump.

The handling of six-card suits after two- or three-notrump openings is the same as after a one-notrump bid.

The value of such a length is 4 points when played in that suit. However, for slam purposes, the suit must be strong enough to insure only one loser, at most; otherwise, a slam may be impossible in the suit, or in notrump if the suit has to be relied on for tricks. As stated previously, suits of this length involve suit-slam bidding rather than notrump bidding. Once the trump suit is determined to be adequate, if there is doubt about the presence of enough Aces, either the Gerber Four Club should be used or the slam merely invited. In the latter event partner should decline if his hand is short in Aces.

Failing to take a substantial credit for six- or seven-card suits for fear that opponents may hold two Aces, is not the solution here. Many laydown slams will be missed where the controls *are* present.

For instance, consider the following hand, given as an example by Goren:

♠ K Q 10 x x x    ♥ x    ♦ x x    ♣ K x x x

Partner opens two notrump. He states, "Bid four spades . . . You have 8 points in high cards. If partner has 24, you will have 32, which with a good six-card suit will sometimes be enough for a slam."

Now, I have dealt out a considerable number of 22-point hands and have yet to find one which did not offer a better-than-even play for six spades. Four spades, a mild slam try which is usually passed by the opener because it denies ability to bid beyond game, is a gross underbid.

Taking a proper valuation of 4 points for the six-card suit, the hand is worth 12 points. This, added to 22, equals 34—enough for a slam. However, the opponents can theoretically have two Aces. Consequently, four clubs should be bid, followed by six spades if partner shows three Aces.

The reader will probably find it possible to set up some notrump hands which will offer a poor play for a slam combined with the above hand.

Slam bidding, however, is not an exact science, any more than other



phases of contract bidding. The best players, using the most advantageous conventions, cannot invariably arrive at favorable slam contracts. In fact, it can be categorically stated that if you never arrive at a slam for which there is no play at all, you are underbidding, and you will miss many favorable slam contracts.

*Examples:*

Partner opened two notrump; you hold:

♠ Q 10 6    ♥ J 8 6 2    ♦ 9 5 4    ♣ 8 4 2

3 points. Bid three notrump. With the 10 of hearts instead of the J pass.

♠ K Q 5 3    ♥ K 9 4 2    ♦ Q 5 4    ♣ 9 7

10 points. Bid four notrump. Without the Q of diamonds, bid only three.

♠ K Q J 8 4 3    ♥ 9 7 2    ♦ 6 5 2    ♣ 8

10 points for spades. Bid four spades. If partner's hand is a maximum, there might be a slam. The four-spade bid is the mildest sort of slam suggestion, as it denies the strength to bid beyond game.

♠ 7 4    ♥ 10 8 3    ♦ Q 7    ♣ Q 9 6 4 3 2

4 points. Bid three notrump; there is no point in showing the clubs. If the clubs were spades (or hearts), bid three spades (or three hearts).

♠ A Q 8    ♥ K 6 2    ♦ Q 6 4 2    ♣ 9 3 2

11 points. Bid six notrump.

Partner opened three notrump; you hold:

♠ 9 4 2    ♥ A J 7 3    ♦ Q 9 5 4    ♣ 8 6

7 points. Bid four notrump. Without the Q of diamonds, pass.

♠ 8 3 2    ♥ Q J 10 5 4    ♦ K J 6 4    ♣ 5

9 points for hearts, 7 in high cards. Bid four clubs, asking partner for Aces. If partner has three Aces, six hearts should be a favorable contract. The heart suit cannot have more than one loser.

♠ Q J 6    ♥ A 9 3 2    ♦ 9 3 2    ♣ K J 8

11 points. Bid three diamonds and follow with six notrump, inviting partner to bid seven with a maximum holding.

## SUMMARY

## NOTRUMP OPENING BIDS

To secure the count of your hand, total your high-card points. The only additional credit in opening notrump valuation is 1 point for hands containing all four Aces.

Open with one notrump with 16-18 points and balanced distribution. The hand must have no worthless doubleton, and at least three suits must be stopped.

Open with two notrump with 22-24 points, a balanced hand and all four suits stopped.

Open with three notrump with 25-27 points, a balanced hand and all four suits stopped.

With hands that otherwise qualify for a notrump bid but contain (a) less than 16 points: bid one of a suit, follow up with one notrump; (b) 19-21 points: bid one of a suit, then follow up with two or three notrump.

## RESPONDING TO OPENING ONE-NOTRUMP BIDS

If both hands are balanced, about 26 points are required for a game in notrump. Consequently, as a responder with no five-card suit:

With less than 8 points, pass.

With 8-9 points, bid two notrump.

With 10-14 points, bid three notrump.

With more points, make a slam try.

With a five-card suit headed by K, or Q-10, or better, and an otherwise balanced hand, responder needs 1 point less.

With unbalanced hands (a six-card suit, two five-card suits, etc.) responder should value his hand in suit valuation, and with adequate support for his suit (or suits) guaranteed by the notrump opening itself, responder should bid his suit rather than raise partner in notrump. (With sufficient count, responder should jump in his own suit.)

For a small slam in notrump, 33 points in the combined hands are necessary if both hands are balanced.

Any suit takeout of a one-notrump bid is a one-round force. Then a rebid of the same suit at a minimum level is a signoff.

## CHAPTER 9

### Opening Bids of One in a Suit

In notrump bidding, where there is usually no long suit, we have seen that the level of the contract is determined by the combined high-card strength. This type of bidding is carried over into suit bidding in many hands where both partners have balanced distribution. For instance:

NORTH  
1 ♣  
1 NT

SOUTH  
1 ♠

North indicates a balanced hand with 12 to 15 points in high cards. If South should also have a balanced hand, 4-3-3-3 for instance, he can determine how much to bid, exactly as he did in notrump bidding, by adding his points to 12 and to 15. Thus, with 10 points he would pass; with 11 or 12 he would bid two notrump—which partner will pass with 12 and usually with 13; or with 13 to 17 points he would bid three notrump. Therefore, with hands containing balanced distribution, there are no complications; just add up the points.

Unbalanced hands, however, or hands with six-card or longer suits, cannot be judged solely by the high cards. Consider these two hands:

1. ♠ A 4 2   ♥ J 7 5   ♦ Q 6 3   ♣ A K 7 5  
14 points or 3 + honor-tricks.

2. ♠ A   ♥ J x   ♦ Q 6 5   ♣ A K 8 6 4 3 2  
14 points or 3 + honor-tricks.

Each hand has 14 points in high cards, but any player would far rather pick up Hand 2. This hand will take many more tricks than the first, and with fair support for clubs in partner's hand, will produce a game or even a slam. Thus, as will shortly be seen, the second hand will be initially valued at 16 compared to 13 for the first hand.

But suppose you hold Hand 2. You bid one club. Your partner responds with one spade and you bid two clubs. Partner then bids two hearts; you bid three clubs. Now your partner bids three hearts. At

this point you would be delighted to exchange your hand for Hand 1 above. With that hand you would have a fair chance for game; with your actual hand you are probably in trouble. Thus, it can be seen that the value of unbalanced hands can only be estimated or even guessed at originally. As the bidding develops their value may alter and they may become more valuable or less valuable, unlike notrump hands whose value remains almost constant throughout the auction. Unbalanced hands must be revalued throughout the bidding, as a good fit or lack of any fit becomes apparent.

### *Examples:*

♠ A K 7 4 3 2. If the outstanding cards are well divided, this suit will produce five tricks at a spade contract. But it may take only two tricks at notrump.

♠ A K 7 4 3 2 and ♥ K Q J 10. With a spade break, this two-suit holding will take eight tricks at spades, whereas only two to four tricks might be taken at notrump. A side suit assumes greater importance at trump play because it can be developed under protection of the trump suit. For this reason, at suit-bids credits are taken for primary and secondary suit lengths. These credits are really only estimates of probable value. Actually they may not develop at all; thus, it is essential that the opening bid contain sufficient defensive and offensive strength in high cards in case the bidding develops unfavorably.

## Opening Bids of One

Ace	= 4 points
King	= 3 points
Queen	= 2 points
Jack	= 1 point

The deck contains 40 points (in high cards).

An average hand is 10 points.

Add 1 point for each trump over four.

Add 1 point for each side-suit card over three.

**SEE PAGE 11 FOR CORRECTION POINTS.**

The following table shows distributions counting 1, 2, and 3 points. This table is simply another (and more complicated) way of expressing the Rule of Three and Four. It is given here so that players will understand better the effect of the count of distributional values.

One five-card suit, or Two four-card suits. }	1 point
One six-card suit, or One five and one four-card suit, or Three four-card suits. }	2 points
One seven-card suit, or One six and one four-card suit, or Two five-card suits, or One five-card suit and two four-card suits. }	3 points

Four or more points constitute a freak hand.

Add the points for suit lengths to the high-card points to obtain the value of the hand.

Most minimum bids are hands which count up to 13 points. This is really a King more than average, which is 10 points. Hands containing a King above average have the values for a bid. Accordingly, hands containing 10 points in honors and 3 points in distributional values often constitute sound openings. But when there are as many as 3 points for suit lengths, the high-card strength declines to *average*, and such hands are dangerous to open unless the high cards are combined in such a way as to produce two defensive winners.

The following table defines "defensive tricks":

A K	= 2	defensive tricks
A Q	= 1½	defensive tricks
A	= 1	defensive trick
K Q x	= 1	defensive trick
K x	= ½	defensive trick

The purpose of this table is to make sure that opening bids have sufficient high cards for defensive purposes. If 3 or more points are credited for suit length, the high-card strength of some hands which have a sufficient count for bids becomes dangerously low. When your hand contains 12 points in high cards, this factor may be disregarded, but with 11 points or less in high cards, hands without two defensive tricks should not be opened.

The table used here is really an abbreviated Culbertson Honor-Trick Table, and other writers on point-count who have really grappled with the difficulties of opening bids have been unable to work out a system without resorting to this or a similar device.

Of the several corrections, the one fundamental deduction is for unsupported Queens and Jacks.  $Q \times x$  in a suit is a questionable asset, but the Queen in  $A Q \times$  or  $K Q \times$  is a solid value; similarly, the Jack in combination with higher honors.

Now consider a few example hands and see if you can compute their values:

1. ♠ A J 6 2   ♥ K 7 4 2   ♦ Q 3   ♣ A 5 3
2. ♠ A K 6 4 3 2   ♥ 7 5   ♦ Q   ♣ K 8 5 3
3. ♠ A J 4 3   ♥ A 5 2   ♦ A 6 4   ♣ A 7 4
4. ♠ K Q 6 4   ♥ Q J 3   ♦ Q 4 2   ♣ K 7 5
5. ♠ A K 7 3   ♥ A Q 2   ♦ 10 7 5 4   ♣ 5 3

Hand 1. Two Aces = 8, King = 3, Queen = 2, Jack = 1. Total = 14. Add 1 point for four-card side suit. Deduct 1 point for unsupported Queen. Value of hand, 14 points.

Hand 2. Ace = 4, Two Kings = 6, unsupported Queen = 1. Total = 11. Add 2 points for the six-card suit and 1 point for the four-card suit. Hence the hand counts  $11 + 3$ , or 14 points.

Hand 3. Four Aces = 16, Jack = 1, add 1 point for all four Aces. Total = 18. No credit for suit length. Value of hand, 18 points.

Hand 4. Two Kings = 6, three Queens = 6, Jack = 1. Total = 13. Deduct 1 point for no Ace and 1 point for unsupported Queen. 13 minus 2 = 11. Value of hand, 11 points.

Hand 5. Two Aces = 8, King = 3, Queen = 2. Total = 13. Add 1 point for four-card diamond length. Value of hand, 14 points.

### Requirements for Opening Bids

Hands counting 14 points or more must always be opened in any position—first, second, third, or fourth hand.

Hands counting 13 points have opening bid values. Consequently, they should be opened as a general rule. However, some hands containing 13 points which have no good rebid should be passed in first or second position.

Hands counting 12 are likely to fall just below the requirements for sound bids. However, 12-point hands may be opened if they have a good rebiddable suit; or if the 12 points are in high cards and they have a biddable suit and a good rebid.

### Fourteen-Point Hands

Fourteen-point hands must be opened. Nothing further need be said on this subject.

However, a matter of considerable importance is: with what bid should they be opened? A player opening in first or second position is under absolute obligation to rebid when his partner responds with a minimum call in a new suit. Consequently, when first or second hand, a player should open in such a way as to afford himself a good rebid over any response by partner. If he has a biddable suit, he should open with that suit unless the bid is going to make it embarrassing for him to rebid. If this is the case, he should open with a three-card minor suit or an unbiddable four-card minor.

What is meant by a biddable or unbiddable suit? In the Culbertson System the following are the minimum biddable suits: Five-card suits headed by the Queen; four-card suits containing two of the four top honors. Thus, the minimum is A J x x, K J x x, or Q J x x. A x x x is not a biddable suit.

Now a word as to the meaning of an unbiddable suit. An unbiddable suit is not one that can *never* be bid under any circumstances. At contract bridge, any bid may be made if it is a lesser evil than alternatives. An unbiddable suit is one which it is undesirable to bid and which should be avoided if a reasonably satisfactory alternative can be found.

The biddable suit principle should be quite rigidly adhered to in the major suits. In minor suits, however, unbiddable suits and even three-card suits must be frequently opened. These are not desirable bids—even in the minors a biddable suit is much to be preferred. It is merely the best solution for opening 14 to 16-point hands which do not conform to the requirements for notrump bids. (Note: For responding at the one-level, or as a second suit, K x x x or Q 10 x x are considered biddable.)

Three-card minors must be headed by at least the Queen.

One club is the best opening for this type of hand, for it always offers the easy rebid of one notrump over any suit response by partner. However, where there is no strength in clubs, a bid of one diamond may be used.

#### EXAMPLES OF 14-POINT HANDS

1. ♠ A J 7 3   ♥ A 9 6 2   ♦ K J 4   ♣ 3 2

13 points in high cards, 3 honor-tricks. 1 point for four-card side suit. Bid

one spade, intending to bid two hearts if partner bids two clubs. (Note: Biddable suit requirements may be slightly shaded in the second suit.)

2. ♠ A 10 6 5   ♥ K 4 3 2   ♦ A Q 7   ♣ 6 4

13 points in high cards and 1 for side suit = 14, 3 honor-tricks. Bid one diamond. Neither major suit is biddable, and if a spade or a heart contract is to be played, it is much better that the bid come from partner. If partner bids two clubs, it will be necessary to rebid a slightly shaky two notrump. It is unthinkable to reverse on this hand by bidding two hearts or two spades. This bid requires a higher count and also guarantees four diamonds (and suggests the probability of five). It would be possible initially to bid spades and then hearts, but the opening minor suit-bid is a better solution.

3. ♠ A 7 5 4   ♥ A K Q   ♦ 6 5 3   ♣ Q 7 2

15 points in high cards, less 1 for unsupported Queen = 14 points. Bid one club.

4. ♠ Q 7 5 4 2   ♥ A 6 3   ♦ A 7 5   ♣ K 4

13 points, plus 1 for five spades = 14. Bid one spade. The spade suit is not strictly rebiddable, but will have to be rebid over two clubs or two diamonds. Over two hearts, bid three hearts. (Note: A short minor should not be opened when the hand contains a five-card suit.)

5. ♠ A K 5 4 3   ♥ K J 4 2   ♦ Q 7 6   ♣ 4

13 points in high cards, 1 for the five-card suit and 1 for the four-card side suit = 15. Deduct 1 for unsupported Queen = 14. Bid one spade. Rebids two hearts unless partner raises.

Note that in Hands 2 and 4 the holder does not have a satisfactory rebid over all of partner's possible responses. However, as the hands count 14 points, they must be opened, so it is a case of choosing the least unpleasant alternative.

## Choice of Suits

Many hands have two or more biddable suits. A very brief statement of the principles governing these hands will be given:

1. With suits of equal length, as a rule first bid the higher ranking suit.

2. With suits of unequal length, as a rule first bid the longer suit.

These two "rules" are subject to many exceptions and are often modified by the "Principle of Preparedness," which decrees that you must



bid in such a way as to be prepared, if possible, for any response by partner.

With two five-card suits, bid the higher ranking first, regardless of their strength. For example, with spades and hearts bid spades first. *Exception:* With five spades and five clubs, open with one club if the clubs are stronger than the spades; or if the spade suit does not contain two of the top four honors.

With a five-card and a biddable four-card suit, bid the five-card suit first except with touching suits. With four spades and five hearts, bid one spade. With four hearts and five diamonds, bid one heart. With four diamonds and five clubs, bid one diamond. However, if the longer suit is also much stronger than the four-card suit, bid and rebid it, suppressing the higher ranking suit. (Note: This applies only to hands counting less than 18. With a count of 18 or more, open with the longer suit and "reverse" with the higher ranking four-card suit.)

Bidding the combinations last mentioned in the suggested order enables you to show both suits without increasing the contract.

If you don't remember all this, merely consider your hand and decide what opening bid will afford you the best rebid. At bridge it is not sufficient merely to make the obvious bid. A player must think ahead and figure out how he proposes to handle contingencies which are likely to arise.

With two "touching" four-card suits, bid the higher ranking first. This rule covers three of the six situations, namely spades and hearts, hearts and diamonds, diamonds and clubs. With spades and clubs—non-touching suits—open one club. This always affords you a safe rebid. With hearts and clubs, usually open with one club. With diamonds and spades, there is no blanket answer. If one spade is bid, two hearts by partner may leave you no good response; if one diamond is bid, two clubs has the same effect.

The best solution is the following: with support for hearts, bid one spade. With support for clubs, bid one diamond. With no support for either, bid the stronger suit, planning to rebid it if the unwelcome response is forthcoming.

With three biddable four-card suits bid the suit below the singleton. (Going "around the corner," consider spades below clubs.)

If any of this escapes your memory, simply look at your hand, note what response by partner will prove the most embarrassing, and, if possible, bid in such a way that this situation is provided for.

**Examples:**

♠ A Q 7 4   ♥ 8 3   ♦ A Q 8 4 2   ♣ 6 5

Bid one diamond—the longest suit.

♠ 6 4   ♥ A Q 9 2   ♦ A Q 8 3 2   ♣ 7 6

Bid one heart. With touching suits, bid the higher ranking with a four and a five-card suit. This affords a rebid of two diamonds over any response.

♠ Q J 9 3   ♥ A K J 10 7   ♦ Q 6   ♣ 4 2

Bid one heart, followed by two hearts, suppressing the spades.

♠ A Q   ♥ A Q 9 2   ♦ A Q 8 3 2   ♣ 7 6

Bid one diamond, intending to reverse with two hearts on the next round.

♠ K J 6 4 2   ♥ 7 6   ♦ 5   ♣ A K Q 8 4

or

♠ Q 10 8 3 2   ♥ A 6   ♦ 5   ♣ A 10 8 6 3

Bid one club.

♠ A K 7 6 4   ♥ 7 6   ♦ 5   ♣ K Q 10 7 2

Bid one spade.

♠ A K J 3   ♥ 7 5   ♦ 9 3 2   ♣ K Q 7 4

Bid one club.

♠ A K 8 3   ♥ Q 5 2   ♦ A J 9 4   ♣ 8 3

Bid one spade. Interchange the clubs and hearts and one diamond is the bid.

♠ 7 3   ♥ A J 8 2   ♦ A K 10 6   ♣ J 8 2

Bid one heart.

♠ K J 8 3   ♥ A J 9 4   ♦ K Q 7 4   ♣ 6

Bid one spade, the suit below the singleton (going around the corner). Interchange the diamonds and clubs, and one club would be the bid—the suit below the singleton.

### Thirteen-Point Hands

Thirteen-point hands are opening bids. However, they are minimums. Consequently, a small minority of these hands are better passed, mainly because opening them may cause embarrassment in the continuation of the bidding.

In first or second position, a 13-point hand should provide a desirable rebid over any response partner may make. Otherwise a pass is

preferable. With 14 points the hand must be opened, even though a rebid may have to be improvised. Without the added point protection it is better to pass than possibly get in trouble.

Consider Examples 2 and 4 under 14-point hands.

2. ♠ A 10 6 5   ♥ K 4 3 2   ♦ A Q 7   ♣ 6 4

One diamond is the best bid. But substitute the Jack of diamonds for the Queen. The hand will now count only 13. The spade suit is not biddable. If one diamond is bid and partner responds two clubs, no reasonable rebid is available. A two-notrump rebid with this weak hand would be courting disaster. Consequently the hand must be passed. However, it can be opened third or fourth hand, because after partner has passed there is no obligation to bid again, should he bid two clubs. Now interchange clubs and diamonds. The hand will then be:

♠ A 10 6 5   ♥ K 4 3 2   ♦ 6 4   ♣ A J 7

Now the situation is completely altered. An opening bid of one club provides a perfect rebid over any response; over one diamond one no-trump should be bid. Consequently the hand should be opened in any position.

4. ♠ Q 7 5 4 2   ♥ A 6 3   ♦ A 7 5   ♣ K 4

One spade must be bid despite the questionable rebid. But reduce the hand to 13 points:

♠ Q 7 5 4 2   ♥ A 6 3   ♦ K 7 5   ♣ K 4

In view of the danger inherent in rebidding such a weak spade suit, it is obviously better to pass. In third or fourth position, however, the hand should be opened, as there is no obligation to rebid.

♠ K J 6 5 3   ♥ A 4 2   ♦ K J 7   ♣ 8 6

Ace = 4, two Kings = 6, two Jacks = 2, trump suit = 1; total, 13. Here the spade suit can be rebid comfortably, so the hand should be opened. A rebiddable suit is a five-card suit containing two honors, or any six-card suit. A four-card suit is never strictly rebiddable, but one containing four of the five honors (here, we are including the ten) may be rebid in a pinch, the same as a five-card suit which is not rebiddable.

♠ A K 6 3   ♥ 7 6   ♦ K Q 5 3   ♣ 5 4 2

Ace = 4, two Kings = 6, Queen = 2, four-card side suit = 1; total,

13 points, 3 honor-tricks. In first or second position, this hand must be passed. If one spade is bid, a two-heart response is bad; if one diamond, two clubs is embarrassing. Interchange the diamonds and hearts, however, and one spade should be bid, as two hearts is a good rebid over any response. In third or fourth position, either hand should be opened.

### Twelve-Point Hands

Twelve-point hands are on the borderline between a bid and a pass. They may be opened if a good rebiddable suit is held. A good rebiddable suit is one headed by three of the five honors. They may also be opened with a biddable suit and 12 points in high cards, or two biddable suits and 11 points in high cards. First or second hand, there must also be a good rebid over any bid by partner.

#### *Examples:*

1. ♠ K J 10 4 2 (5) ♥ A 7 5 (4) ♦ K 6 5 (3) ♣ 7 3

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid one spade. Without the ten of spades the hand is better passed.

2. ♠ A K 7 5 4 2 (9) ♥ K 8 6 (3) ♦ 4 3 ♣ 6 5

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid one spade. (or ♠ K Q J 7 5 4 ♥ A 7 5)

3. ♠ A K 4 2 (7) ♥ A J 5 (5) ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ 7 6 2

12 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Pass first- or second-hand—there is no rebid. Third- or fourth-hand, bid one spade.

4. ♠ A 10 6 5 ♥ K 7 4 3 ♦ 6 2 ♣ A 5 3

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Pass—there is no biddable suit.

5. ♠ 8 7 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ A Q 5 4 ♣ K Q 3 2

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid one diamond.

### Third-Hand Bids

Third-hand, weaker bids are permissible (and often advisable) than in any other position. With a rebiddable suit it is good strategy to open 11-point hands in this position, or even 10 if you are not vulnerable. Of course, these hands are not real bids, but bidding them has proved a winning method. Two purposes are served: first, a good opening lead

is indicated for your partner; second, the bid may impede, at least to a slight extent, the opponents' bidding. Third-hand is quite different from fourth-hand. You are not in a position to have a new deal—the fourth player will usually open anyway. And in the cases where he would have passed, it will frequently be found that your side has the best hand.

*Examples of third-hand lead-directing bids:*

1. ♠ A K J 6 3 (9) ♥ Q 7 5 (2) ♦ J 4 2 ♣ 8 7  
11 points, 2½ honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

2. ♠ 8 7 ♥ Q 6 4 2 (2) ♦ 10 3 ♣ A K 5 4 2 (8)  
11 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid one club.

3. ♠ 6 3 ♥ A Q 7 4 2 (7) ♦ K 6 5 2 (4) ♣ 8 6  
11 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid one heart.

## Fourth-Hand

Fourth-hand, after three passes, is in a pleasurable situation, for he has the option of throwing the hand in or opening for a probable profit. In one respect bidding requirements are relaxed: there is no obligation to rebid; consequently all 13-point hands may be opened. Twelve-point hands, however, without strength in the majors, are better passed out. The slight advantage in points (12 instead of 11, which is about average) is not enough to compensate for the fact that you are likely to be outbid in a higher-ranking suit.

A holding of three Aces (12 points) is a borderline bid for fourth hand. Due to undervaluation of the Ace the hand is really worth more than 12, and opening fourth-hand, even with a short minor, should yield a slight advantage on the average.

*Examples:*

1. ♠ A 10 6 3 (4) ♥ K 5 4 2 (4) ♦ A J 7 (5) ♣ 6 5  
13 points, 2½ honor-tricks. Bid one diamond. Pass two clubs by partner.

2. ♠ A 10 6 3 (4) ♥ K 5 4 2 (4) ♦ A 8 7 (4) ♣ 6 5  
12 points, 2½ honor-tricks. Pass or bid one diamond. This hand is right

on the line between a bid and a pass. Strength in both majors gives you a slight advantage.

3. ♠ A K 7 5 4 2 (9) ♥ K 6 3 (3) ♦ 8 7 ♣ 6 4

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

4. ♠ 6 3 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K 5 4 2 (4) ♣ A K 10 5 3 (8)

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Pass. Although the hand counts for a bid, it has no future. You will be outbid in the majors. Strength in the majors, especially spades, is a great inducement to opening fourth-hand. The situation is the reverse of first- and second-hand, where major suits may be deterrent to opening because of rebid difficulties.

5. ♠ 6 4 ♥ 7 6 ♦ Q 5 3 (1) ♣ A K Q 4 3 2 (11)

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Pass. Although a satisfactory opening, the hand has no future, due to major suit weakness. Change the clubs to spades or hearts, and one spade or one heart should be opened.

### Freak Two-Suiters

This type of hand, having a six-five, six-six, or seven-five distribution, will count 4 or 5 points for distribution. Hands counting as little as 8 points in high cards (two Aces) should be opened in some cases. Singleton honors (except the Ace) should be given little consideration. Naturally, hands counting 10 in high cards (leaving out singleton honors) should be opened. In addition to this, any such hand having a sure trick in each long suit should be opened.

#### *Examples:*

1. ♠ A 9 7 6 4 3 (6) ♥ 8 ♦ A 6 5 3 2 (6) ♣ 7

Only 12 points, 2 honor-tricks. But open with one spade.

2. ♠ 8 ♥ K Q 6 5 3 2 (7) ♦ 7 ♣ A 6 5 4 3 (6)

13 points. Open one heart.

Hands of comparable strength with one suit headed only by a King or Queen are exactly borderline hands, and may be opened or not as a player prefers.

*Examples:*

1. ♠ A Q 7 6 4 3    ♥ 7    ♦ K 6 5 4 2    ♣ 7
2. ♠ A K 6 5 4    ♥ 4 3    ♦ Q 8 6 5 4 2    ♣ —

## SUMMARY

## OPENING BIDS OF ONE IN A SUIT

With 14 points or more always open the bidding.

With 13 points usually open the bidding. Pass first or second-hand if your hand does not contain a satisfactory rebid. Usually pass fourth-hand with only 11 points in high cards and only minor suits.

With 12 points open first or second-hand only with a good rebiddable suit, or with 12 points in high cards, a biddable suit and a good rebid, or with 11 points in high cards and two biddable suits.

*Choice of Suits*

When opening first or second-hand, you *guarantee* a rebid, unless partner makes a weak, limited response.

In third and fourth position, you are under no such obligation, but you will *wish* to make a rebid if your hand is above the minimum zone (at least 15-16 points).

In either case, in choosing *which* suit to bid first, prepare to rebid in such a way as to avoid landing on a level higher than justified by the strength of your hand. *This is the Principle of Preparedness.*

When you have suits of unequal length, bid the longer one first. *This is the Principle of Picturing your Hand.*

At times these principles will be in conflict with each other; at other times they may be in conflict with the requirements for a biddable suit. If that is so, the player must make a decision as to which principle or requirement he should violate. Bear in mind that the Principle of Preparedness is the most important. Some of the following rules, therefore, may be modified, and when such modification is permissible they are marked accordingly.

*Rules as to Choice of Suits*

<b>Divided</b>	<b>Your Choice Should Be</b>
<b>6-6</b>	<b>Bid the higher ranking suit first.</b>
<b>6-5</b>	<b>Bid the longer suit first. (P)*</b>
<b>5-5</b>	<b>Bid the higher ranking suit first. (Exception: some hands with five spades and five clubs)</b>
<b>5-4</b>	<b>Bid the longer suit first. (P)*</b>
<b>4-4-4-1</b>	<b>Bid the suit below the singleton. (B)**</b>
<b>4-4-3-2</b>	<b>If the suits are "touching" (spades-hearts, hearts-diamonds, diamonds-clubs), bid the higher ranking one. If they are not touching, bid the lower ranking one. (B)**</b>

\* (P) stands for: may be modified to conform with Principle of Preparedness.

\*\* (B) stands for: may be modified to conform with requirement for biddable suit.



## CHAPTER 10

# Responses to Suit-Bids of One

Responses may be placed in three categories, according to strength.

### I. Hands of Only Moderate Strength

Unless partner has considerably more than a minimum, game will be impossible. The point-count for such hands extends from a minimum of 5 points to a maximum of 10. This category is comprised of the following three bids:

1. The response of one notrump.
2. The single raise in partner's suit.
3. The response of one in a new suit—a "one-over-one."

Bids which have a very narrow range are known as "limit bids." The responses of one notrump and a single raise are in this class. If you open with one heart and your partner responds two hearts, you know that partner's hand ranges from rather weak to moderately good support. In other words, if your opening is minimum or close to minimum, at two hearts you might: (*a*) be down one; (*b*) just make two-odd; (*c*) possibly make three-odd. But you won't make four. Partner's holding will range from 6 points to 10 points. With your own 13 or 14, you have a combined maximum of 23 or 24, whereas 26 points are required for a favorable play for game in a major suit.

If your partner responds with one notrump, you know that he has a hand ranging from 6 points minimum to a maximum of 10. As a rule he has balanced distribution (although he might possibly have a singleton in your suit if you opened with a major).

These two bids define responder's hand within narrow limits. Not so the third bid, a response of one in a new suit. This in many cases is a bid falling in the category of weak responses—in fact it is, at its minimum, the weakest response in the game. This is hard for many players to understand; but it follows a general principle of contract

that the lowest bid, that is, the cheapest, is the weakest. On the other hand the one-over-one has the widest range of values of any bid in the game. For the bidding sequence:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♡	Pass	1 ♠	

The one-spade bid might show the following hand:

♠ A 7 5 4 3   ♡ 6 2   ♦ 8 5 3   ♣ 7 4 3

5 points—4 in high cards; or it might be such a rock-crusher as the following 19-point hand:

♠ A Q 7 5 2   ♡ Q 6   ♦ A J 5   ♣ K Q 4

Thus the one-over-one is an indeterminate bid. It may be a comparatively weak response, it may be a constructive bid, or it may fall in the class of game-forcing bids. *Which* class it is in will develop on subsequent rounds of bidding.

### The Response of One Notrump

As previously stated, one notrump should be bid in response on hands ranging from 6 to 10 points; they are normally hands of balanced distribution, but might have a singleton in partner's suit if it is a major suit; they usually have no five-card suit, but may contain a five-card, or exceptionally even a six-card, lower ranking suit. If the suit were higher ranking, a one-over-one response would be in order. Only high-card points are counted for notrump responses. Six points is the minimum requirement, but the requirement may be shaded to 5 points if the hand contains a ten combined with a higher honor or a 10-9-x-x.

#### *Examples:*

Partner bids one heart. With

♠ K 10 7 (3)   ♡ K 6 (3)   ♦ 7 5 4 3   ♣ 8 6 4 2

6 points, respond one notrump.

♠ A 6 2   ♡ 5 4 2   ♦ Q 7 5 4   ♣ 6 4 3

6 points, respond one notrump.

♠ A 7 5   ♡ K 3   ♦ K 5 4 3   ♣ 7 5 4 3

10 points, respond one notrump.

With less than 6 points, pass.

Over a one-club opening, the minimum one-notrump response should be about 8 points. A one-over-one response should be used if the bidding is kept open on less.

## The Single Raise

To raise partner's suit a player must have adequate trump support—four small trumps, three to the Queen, or three to the Jack-ten in a major suit. In practice this is sometimes shaded as low as three small, but only with a singleton and when any other response seems *more* undesirable. A minor suit requires four trumps for an immediate raise.

A single raise requires adequate trump support and, usually, a minimum of 6 points; the maximum is 10 points.

In special cases (as when there are five trumps or unbalanced distribution in the responding hand) a shaded raise may be given on only 5 points.

For example, partner bids one spade. Holding any of the first six hands following, a raise to two spades is the correct response. You hold:

1. ♠ 7 5 3 2 ♥ K 6 (3) ♦ K 7 5 4 (4) ♣ 4 3 2

7 points, 1/2 honor-trick.

2. ♠ Q 6 4 3 (2) ♥ 5 2 ♦ K 7 5 4 (4) ♣ 4 3 2

6 points, 1/2 + honor-tricks.

3. ♠ Q 7 6 (2) ♥ K 5 4 3 2 (5) ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 7 5 (1)

7 points, 1/2 + honor-trick. (Deduct 1 point for only three trumps.)

4. ♠ K 6 5 4 (4) ♥ A K 7 (7) ♦ 8 3 2 ♣ 5 3 2

10 points, 2 1/2 honor-tricks. (Deduct 1 point for 4-3-3-3 distribution.)

5. ♠ A 7 6 (4) ♥ 6 5 4 3 (1) ♦ K J 4 3 2 (6) ♣ 5

10 points. (Deduct 1 point for only three trumps.)

6. ♠ A 6 5 3 (5) ♥ 4 ♦ Q 7 6 2 (3) ♣ 5 4 3 2 (1)

9 points.

7. ♠ 8 5 4 ♥ A Q 5 2 (6) ♦ 5 4 3 ♣ 7 6 2

6 points, 1 1/2 honor-tricks. One notrump is the correct response.

Minor suits require four trumps for an immediate raise.

## The One-Over-One Response

As the cheapest response possible, this bid has the lowest requirements of any response. It may be made on as little as 5 points.

For example, partner bids one diamond. You hold:

♠ A 7 6 5 3 (5)    ♥ 4 2    ♦ 8 7 6    ♣ 5 4 3

5 points, 1 honor-trick. Bid one spade.

♠ Q J 7 6 4 3 (5)    ♥ 8    ♦ 5 4 2    ♣ 7 6 4

5 points, 1/2 honor-trick. Bid one spade.

♠ K Q 5 3 (5)    ♥ 8 2    ♦ 7 6 5    ♣ 5 4 3 2

5 points, 1 honor-trick. Bid one spade.

Sometimes a hand qualifies either as a one-over-one or as a notrump response. Prefer generally the one-over-one response. But the suit should be headed by at least the Queen or Jack-ten. It is best to avoid bidding weaker suits, even in response.

♠ J 7 4 3 (1)    ♥ A 6 5 (4)    ♦ 8 7 2    ♣ Q 6 5 (2)

7 points. Partner bids one diamond. Bid one notrump—not one spade.

♠ Q 10 7 6 (2)    ♥ A J 4 (5)    ♦ 5 3 2    ♣ 8 5 4

7 points. Bid one spade.

In responding with a new suit, points for long suits are counted and added to points for high cards, just as in the opening bid.

## II. Intermediate Encouraging Bids

Hands justifying encouraging responses usually count 11-13 points. They are too strong for a weak response; on the other hand, they are not strong enough to force a game. The proper procedure here is to make two constructive bids, encouraging partner to continue to game if he has a little more than a minimum. A minimum suit response (forcing for one round) is used for this purpose and is followed on the next round by a further encouraging bid—a bid in a new suit, a raise of partner's suit, or a bid of two notrump.

The first bid is always a minimum response in a new suit. It may be a one-over-one, or the bid of a new suit at the two-level. Of course, all such bids are not necessarily encouraging—only when responder bids for the second time will his intention become clear.

Examples of one-over-one as an encouraging bid. Partner has opened one heart:

♠ K J 7 5 (4) ♥ 4 3 ♦ A 5 4 (4) ♣ Q J 3 2 (3)

11 points, plus 1 for four-card side suit = 12, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid one spade; if partner bids one notrump, bid two notrump.

♠ A 7 5 6 (5) ♥ K J 4 (4) ♦ 3 2 ♣ K 7 5 4 (4)

12 points in support of hearts, 2 + honor-tricks. Deduct 1 for only three trumps. Bid one spade. If partner bids two hearts, bid three hearts.

The minimum response of two in a new suit is used most frequently to represent at least a fairly good hand, but is not necessarily of this type. It may be slightly weaker, and come under the class of mildly encouraging bids, or it may be considerably stronger, the holder's intention being to surely reach game eventually.

This response must be substantially stronger than a *minimum* one-over-one response—the minimum count for a response at the two-level is normally 10 points but may be shaded to 9 points. When the hand is this weak, it falls in the upper range of one-notrump responses, but the two-level suit takeout is used when the strength is concentrated in one suit and consequently the hand is unadapted to notrump.

For example, partner bids one heart. You hold:

♠ 8 6 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ 7 5 2 ♣ A K J 6 5 (9)

9 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two clubs.

♠ 7 5 4 ♥ 8 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ A Q J 6 5 3 (9)

9 points, 1½ + honor tricks. Bid two clubs. The intention here is to pass partner's next bid unless he forces.

### Choice of Bids

When your hand qualifies either as a single raise for partner's major suit or as a response in a new suit, prefer the raise. The reason for this is that such a hand is not good enough for two bids. Consequently, if you bid your suit you cannot show support for partner, and this may be the one thing he needs to know in order to bid game.

For example, partner bids one heart. You hold:

♠ 7 5 ♥ K 6 4 (3) ♦ A J 5 4 3 (7) ♣ 8 4 2

10 points, 1½ + honor-tricks, less 1 point for only three trumps = 9

points in support of hearts. Also 9 points for a two-diamond takeout. Prefer the raise to two hearts.

♠ A 6 5 4 2 (6) ♥ J 7 6 3 (2) ♦ 5 4 ♣ 6 5

8 points, 1 honor-trick in support of hearts. 6 points for one spade. Bid two hearts.

More frequently, however, the bid of two in a new suit indicates a rather better hand—a hand with which partner should be encouraged to go on to game, but permitted to stop if he has a minimum.

For example, partner bids one spade. You hold:

♠ A J 7 (5) ♥ K Q J 5 (7) ♦ 7 6 5 3 (1) ♣ 4 2

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks, deducting 1 point for only three trumps. Bid two hearts; if partner bids two spades, raise to three spades.

♠ J 5 4 3 (2) ♥ 8 ♦ A K 7 6 (8) ♣ 6 4 3 2 (1)

11 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid two diamonds and raise spades on the next round. Partner should not look to responder for four trumps on this bidding, though it is possible that he has four, as above.

♠ 8 6 ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ K J 3 (4) ♣ A K 7 6 4 (8)

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid two clubs, and over two spades bid two notrump. If partner bids two notrump, bid three notrump. 26 points are assured, as partner should have 15 for a two-notrump rebid.

♠ 6 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ A K Q 7 6 2 (11) ♣ 5 4 2

11 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two diamonds followed by three diamonds (unless partner bids two notrump, in which case bid three notrump). The bid of three diamonds here is not a signoff on this sequence of bidding, but encourages partner to continue the bidding—preferably not in spades, however.

## Improving the Contract

Almost all bids in contract bridge are to be regarded as forward bids, that is, they encourage partner at least to a slight extent, to go forward toward a game. Signoffs have lost favor of recent years. Some bids, it is true, indicate that it is probably better for partner to pass, but with an unusually good fit he is at liberty to overrule this suggestion. For instance, consider this auction:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♦	

The bid of three diamonds certainly indicates that the responder believes that this is the best contract to play, but opener, holding a maximum hand with four diamonds to the Ace or King, or with A K x, A Q x, or K Q x in diamonds, may still go on to three notrump and rely on his partner for having more than six diamonds to the Jack.

Then again, certain types of bidding seem to preclude the possibility of game.

SOUTH	NORTH
1 $\diamond$	1 $\heartsuit$
1 NT	2 $\diamond$

Both partners have bid weakly here, so the chance of their holding 26 points seems remote. However, if opener was just short of a jump two-notrump rebid, he might now bid two notrump, hoping to find responder with a maximum holding for his bidding. (Note: One clear exception to this is where a player rescues his partner from a doubled contract. Here he may have almost no high-card values.) When responder makes a bid, partner should play him for holding the minimum strength required for that bid; if he bids a second time, that also shows some added values, if only distributional values.

However, there are circumstances where the required strength must be shaded even at the risk of misleading partner to some extent. Suppose your partner opens one spade and you hold:

♠ —    ♥ Q J 10 9 6 5    ♦ 4 3    ♣ J 10 7 6 2

What should you do? Of course, if partner had opened with a diamond, you would have the clear-cut, cheap response of one heart. But unfortunately he opened with a spade. You have only 4 points in high cards, and even if you take 4 for distribution, that makes only 8—2 points short of a response at the two-level. Furthermore, your void in spades indicates possible danger. Should you pass and let your partner suffer, or should you bid and try to improve matters at the risk of making them worse? This is one of the most unpleasant types of hands to have to bid. Actually the problem is one of calculated risk: which bid will tend to win (or save) more points on the average?

Suppose you bid two hearts. If partner rebids spades, you would, of course, have been better off to pass. However, if he bids two or three spades you are probably only 50 to 200 points worse off than if you had passed. If he bids four spades, of course, the loss might be some-

what greater, though he should not make this bid without a very big hand and an independent spade suit. But if he bids notrump or raises hearts you will be in a position to score a game or a partial instead of being set at spades.

For instance, partner could hold:

♠ A 7 6 5 3    ♥ A K 7 2    ♦ A 5 4    ♣ 8

With this hand six hearts can probably be made, where one spade will go down. If you pass, this is a much bigger loss than could come from a spade rebid by partner.

Suppose you pass. If the next opponent re-opens the bidding you are probably in good shape. However, it is probable that your partner will be left in one spade. Either your opponent will have a lot of spades and be satisfied with the contract, or if his partner made a trap pass he may be too weak to reopen. Of course, it is also possible the opponents may bid and make three notrump, which your pass has made easy for them.

Consequently it can be seen that bidding is likely to turn out better than passing on this hand. It is doubtful if any good player would pass it. However, this is about the least that should be bid. Weaken the hand to

♠ —    ♥ Q 7 6 5 4 3    ♦ 7 2    ♣ J 5 4 3 2

and a pass would be in order.

Take the following hand:

♠ 5 3    ♥ K Q J 10 6 2    ♦ 7 6 4    ♣ 5 2

A strict point-counter held this hand. His partner opened a club, he bid a heart, and his partner rebid one notrump. Responder decided he did not have enough for a second bid, for which he should have around 10 points. He had only 8—only 6 in high cards. So it was down two at one notrump, whereas two hearts would have been a lay-down.

Now this, obviously, makes no sense. Responder had more to gain by trying to reach a playable contract than to lose by fooling his partner to the extent of 1 or 2 points. If partner bid two notrump, responder could still bid three hearts, and should partner (exceptionally) continue to three notrump, he would necessarily have the Ace of hearts and should have a play to make it. (In our system, there are at least 9 points, counting 1 for 100 honors; and see also page 127.)

The rule should be, therefore, that where partner is apparently in a



bad contract, the requirements for a player's bid may be shaded a couple of points in order to find a better spot.

### III. Strong Responses

This category comprises: 1. Jump raises to three of partner's suit. 2. Jump takeouts to two or three notrump. 3. Forcing takeouts: bids of one trick more than necessary in a new suit. 4. Jumps to game in partner's suit: strong only distributionally.

#### Double Raise in Partner's Suit

This bid is forcing to game in a major suit, and is strongly encouraging, though not forcing, in a minor. The minimum trump holding for this bid is four to an honor (J x x x). However, the raise may be given, exceptionally, with four small, A K x, A Q x, or K Q x if no other satisfactory bid is available. The point requirement for this bid is 13-16 points, and a minimum of 10 points must be in high cards.

For example, partner opens one heart. You hold:

♠ 7 ♥ K Q 5 4 (6) ♦ A J 3 2 (6) ♣ 7 6 4 3 (1)

13 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

♠ 8 ♥ K Q 7 4 (6) ♦ A K J 6 (9) ♣ 6 5 4 2 (1)

16 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

Partner bids one spade. You hold:

♠ A 7 5 3 (5) ♥ A K 4 (7) ♦ K 3 2 (3) ♣ 6 5 4

14 points (deducting 1 for 4-3-3-3 distribution), 3½ honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

♠ K 7 5 4 (4) ♥ A K 4 3 (8) ♦ Q 7 6 (2) ♣ 5 4

14 points, 2½ + honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

#### Jump Takeout to Two Notrump

This bid is forcing to game. It requires a balanced distribution and 13-15 points in high cards.

For example, partner bids one spade. You hold:

♠ 7 6 ♥ K Q 4 (5) ♦ A 5 4 3 (4) ♣ K J 7 2 (4)

13 points, 2½ + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

♠ K 7 5 (3) ♥ A Q 4 (6) ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ A Q 5 (6)  
15 points, 3½ honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

### Jump Takeout to Three Notrump

This bid requires a count of 16-18, with a stopper in all unbid suits. The distribution should be either 4-3-3-3, or 4-4-3-2, with the doubleton in partner's suit. It is a mild slam try, since a bid of *two* notrump would obviously get the partnership to game.

For example, partner bids one spade. You hold:

♠ Q 5 4 (2) ♥ A Q 3 (6) ♦ K J 7 2 (4) ♣ A J 4 (5)  
17 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

If the hand contains more than 18 points, it is too big for a three-notrump takeout, and a game-forcing takeout should be employed.

### Borderline Zones

The reader should note that throughout suit bidding there is an overlap of bidding situations. For example, 10 points can be considered either in the minimum zone for responses, or in the constructive zone. Thirteen points may be in the zone of game bids, or of game encouragement. These overlaps are the borderline, twilight zones, and a player must use his judgment as to which course of action is best with the particular hand he holds, and with the partner he has. He should decide whether his hand seems to be a favorable one or not for the number of points he holds. (See Chapter 4.) However, whatever action he decides upon, he cannot be far out of line, and should rarely, if ever, incur any disasters if he should make a wrong decision.

### The Game-Forcing Takeout

This is a response of one trick more than necessary in a new suit. The point-count required is a minimum of 18 points. Where the count is only 18-19 it indicates either good support for partner's suit or an independent suit of one's own. This bid is forcing to game and strongly suggests a slam.

For example, partner bid one heart. You hold:

♠ A K 7 5 2 (9) ♥ K 5 4 (3) ♦ A Q 7 4 (7) ♣ 2  
18 points, 4 honor-tricks, in support of hearts (19, less 1 for only three trumps). Bid two spades.

♠ — (1) ♥ Q 5 4 3 (3) ♦ A K 7 5 4 3 (10) ♣ K Q 6 (5)  
19 points, 3 + honor-tricks, in support of hearts. Bid three diamonds.

♠ A K J 6 5 3 (10) ♥ 4 ♦ K Q 3 (5) ♣ A 7 5 (4)  
19 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid two spades.

♠ A 3 (4) ♥ 7 5 ♦ A K Q J 4 (11) ♣ K 5 4 2 (4)  
19 points, 3½ + honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

### The Triple Raise in a Major

This is a pre-emptive raise showing very strong trump support, but not more than 8 points in high cards, and usually a freakish distribution. Hands distributed 5-3-3-2 do not qualify, as they have too many losers.

For example, partner bids one heart. You hold:

♠ 5 4 ♥ Q 7 5 3 2 (4) ♦ A J 6 4 3 (7) ♣ 5  
11 points, 7 in high cards. Bid four hearts.

♠ — (1) ♥ Q 7 6 5 3 2 (7) ♦ K 6 5 4 3 (5) ♣ 5 4  
13 points (5 points in high cards), 1 honor-trick. Bid four hearts.

### Responding After Having Passed

The fact that a player has previously passed makes a great difference in his responses. He should remember that his responses are no longer forcing. Consequently, he can no longer employ a minimum bid in a new suit as an encouraging bid unless he is quite willing to play the hand in that contract. A double raise also is no longer forcing; consequently, if he wishes to be sure of getting to game, he must jump to four. The triple raise therefore becomes stronger than the double raise and is no longer a pre-empt—which would be pointless anyway, as both opponents have already passed. As he has denied opening-bid values, he may give a double raise on only 12 points, and since a raise is likely to be more helpful to partner than a nonforcing bid in a new suit, a single raise may show as much as 11 points.

Similarly, a jump response of two notrump may now be made on 11 or 12 points, as this bid may be passed by partner.

For example, after your original pass, partner bids one heart. You hold:

♠ 5 ♥ 6 4 3 2 (1) ♦ Q 7 3 (2) ♣ A K 5 4 3 (9)

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three hearts—not two clubs, which partner is more likely to pass.

♠ 7 6   ♥ Q J 5 (2)   ♦ 8 5 3   ♣ A Q J 5 4 (9)

11 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two hearts. This is a more constructive bid than two clubs.

♠ 8   ♥ K 7 6 5 3 (5)   ♦ 5 4   ♣ A Q 7 6 4 (8)

13 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid four hearts.

♠ K 5 4 (3)   ♥ 6 3   ♦ A J 7 6 (5)   ♣ K J 5 3 (4)

12 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid two notrump, not two clubs or two diamonds. This gives an exact picture of the hand; two clubs or diamonds might very likely be passed and go down with only three-card support. Partner need not continue over two notrump.

A minimum response at the two-level also may be made on slightly shaded values, as partner need not respond to this bid.

A jump bid in a new suit is a specialized bid telling partner that the responder expects to score a game despite his initial pass if partner has the minimum values for a bid. Opener may pass only if he shaded the requirements for a bid. There is no point in making a jump bid merely because you have passed a good hand—if a free rebid by partner is needed to go game, the jump serves no useful purpose, and merely crowds the bidding. A correct jump bid (takeout) is likely to show a big fit with partner, a set-up minor suit suggesting three notrump, or a freak hand with a very strong suit.

For example, partner bids one heart. You hold:

♠ 7 4   ♥ 6 5 3   ♦ A K Q 10 6 2 (11)   ♣ 6 5

11 points. Bid three diamonds.

♠ 8   ♥ Q 7 6 4 (3)   ♦ A K 7 5 4 3 2 (11)   ♣ 6

15 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. 1 point added for two singletons. Bid three diamonds. (Hand valued in support of hearts.)

Partner bids one spade. You hold:

♠ K 6 (3)   ♥ Q J 10 9 5 4 3 (6)   ♦ A 2 (4)   ♣ 6 4

13 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

### Free Bids

This section will cover the proper procedure when your right-hand opponent has entered the bidding. If your holding justifies a strong

response, you should bid as far as possible just as if he had not entered the bidding, that is, you give a double raise, bid two or three notrump, or force in a new suit. Where your hand falls into the minimum type of responses, however, your bidding should be somewhat modified.

The weakest permissible responses are made for the purpose of keeping the bidding open in case your partner has a big hand. As your opponent has kept the bidding open, your partner will have an opportunity to indicate great strength, should he have it, without any assistance from you. Consequently with weak hands, counting 6 or 7 points, you should always pass, and plan to show such values later if partner is able to rebid. Thus, all bids over opponents' bids—that is, free bids—show fairly good hands, a minimum of about 9 points.

### Free Bids of Notrump

The bid of one notrump over an opponent's overcall shows a balanced distribution, a stopper in opponent's suit, and 9-12 points.

For example, one diamond by partner, one spade by opponent. You hold:

♠ K 10 7 (3)    ♥ 6 5 3 2    ♦ Q 4 3 (2)    ♣ A 6 4 (4)  
9 points, 11½ honor-tricks. Bid one notrump.

♠ Q J 7 (3)    ♥ A 6 5 3 (4)    ♦ K 6 3 (3)    ♣ Q 6 2 (2)  
12 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid one notrump.

The bid of two notrump over an opponent's one-level overcall should show 13 points with two stoppers in opponent's suit, or 14 points with one stopper.

To bid two notrump over opponent's two-level overcall requires 11 points with two stoppers in opponent's suit, or 12 points with one stopper.

### Free Raises

A free raise of partner's suit shows from 8 to 11 points in support of his suit.

For example, one heart by partner, two diamonds by opponent. You hold:

♠ 7 6    ♥ Q 5 4 3 (2)    ♦ J 6 2 (1)    ♣ A 7 6 5 (5)  
8 points, 1 + honor-tricks. Bid two hearts.

♠ 7 4   ♥ Q 6 5 3 (2)   ♦ A 4 2 (4)   ♣ K 6 4 3 (4)  
10 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid two hearts.

### Free Bids in a New Suit

A free bid at the one-level requires a minimum count of 9 points.

For example, one diamond by partner, one heart by opponent. You hold:

♠ K Q 7 4 (5)   ♥ 6 3   ♦ 8 6 3   ♣ A 5 4 2 (5)  
10 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

♠ A J 7 6 4 (6)   ♥ 5 3   ♦ 7 6 2   ♣ K 7 2 (3)  
9 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

The requirement for a bid at the two-level is 10 points, except where your suit is higher ranking than partner's, in which case about 12 is needed. This is because partner may be forced to rebid at the three-level.

For example, one diamond by partner, one spade by opponent. You hold:

♠ 7 5 4   ♥ K 6 2 (3)   ♦ 8 6   ♣ A Q 5 4 2 (7)  
10 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid two clubs. Partner, having opened with a diamond, must be prepared to bid over two clubs. Opponent's overcall has not raised the level of bidding.

One diamond by partner, two clubs by opponent. You hold:

♠ A Q 7 6 3 (7)   ♥ K 5 4 (3)   ♦ 3 2   ♣ 6 5 4  
10 points, 2 honor-tricks. This is too weak for a bid of two spades, as it may force partner to the three-level. Partner was prepared to bid one notrump or two diamonds, probably, over one spade, but he may not be at all anxious to bid three diamonds or two notrump. Substitute the Queen of diamonds for a small diamond, and the hand (12 points) would qualify as a two-spade bid.

Though, normally, a player should have 9 points for a free bid, this need not be rigidly adhered to. The point-count alone is not the only consideration. (See Chapter 4.) With unusually strong suits, 8 points will suffice.

For example, partner bids one diamond, opponent one heart. You hold:

♠ A Q 7 6 5 3 (8)   ♥ 4 2   ♦ 5 3   ♣ 6 5 2  
8 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

Partner bids one diamond, opponent one spade. You hold:

♠ 7 6 ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ A K J 10 5 (9)

9 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two clubs.

### Responding Over an Opposing Double

When an opponent doubles the opening bid for a takeout, the bidding of opener's partner must be considerably altered:

1. With a good hand, containing well-distributed strength, redouble. The redouble does not necessarily show any support for partner and may indicate a desire to double the enemy. About 10 points in high cards are required, but with strong support for partner you may shade it to 8.

2. With a good hand, but with the strength largely concentrated in one suit, make a one-round force by jumping one level in your own suit.

For example, one spade by partner, double by next opponent. You hold:

♠ Q 7 6 5 2 (4) ♥ A Q 4 3 (7) ♦ 6 ♣ 7 6 5

11 points in support of spades, 2 honor-tricks. Redouble.

♠ 8 ♥ A J 7 6 (5) ♦ K 5 4 2 (3) ♣ K 6 5 2 (3)

11 points, 2½ honor-tricks. Redouble.

♠ 8 ♥ K 7 5 (3) ♦ A K J 10 4 2 (10) ♣ 7 6 4

13 points, 2½ + honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

With a fair hand (9-10 points), pass and await developments, planning to make a constructive bid on the next round.

For example, one heart by partner, double by opponent. You hold:

♠ K 6 (3) ♥ Q 7 5 (2) ♦ A 4 3 2 (4) ♣ 6 4 3 2

9 points, 1½ + honor-tricks. Opponents cannot go game. Raise hearts on the next round.

With weak or mediocre hands the procedure is as follows:

With four trumps and about 5-7 points, raise partner's suit once. With five trumps, or four strong trumps, and 8-10 points, mostly distributional, give a double raise. Both these bids indicate a hand weak in high cards.

For example, one spade by partner, double by opponent. You hold:

♠ J 7 6 5 (1) ♥ J 4 3 (1) ♦ K 6 4 2 (4) ♣ 7 5

6 points, ½ honor-trick. Bid two spades.

♠ Q 7 6 5 2 (4) ♥ 4 ♦ Q 6 5 4 3 (4) ♣ 7 2

8 points, ½ honor-trick. Bid three spades.

A bid in a new suit over the double shows either a mediocre hand (maximum 8 or 9 points) or a very weak hand and inability to play at a doubled contract in partner's suit.

For example, one heart by partner, double by opponent. You hold:

♠ A 10 7 6 4 (5) ♥ 3 2 ♦ K 5 4 (3) ♣ 7 5 4

8 points, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

♠ Q 9 7 5 4 3 (4) ♥ 8 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ 5 4 2

4 points. Bid one spade.

A bid over the double waves a red flag at partner as far as rebidding his own suit is concerned. For example, in the same bidding—one heart by partner, double by opponent—if you hold:

♠ Q 9 7 6 5 3 (4) ♥ 5 4 3 ♦ 8 ♣ 7 6 2

Pass. You have three hearts and therefore need not fear a contract of one heart doubled.

With any other type of weak hand, pass.

## SUMMARY

### RESPONDING TO OPENING SUIT-BIDS OF ONE

With 0-4 points, pass.

With 5 points, respond only if you can do so with a bid of one in a suit (or raise with five trumps).

With 6-10 points, your hand is in the minimum zone, which warrants only one bid toward game. With adequate support for partner's suit, raise his suit. Lacking adequate support, bid one-over-one if possible, or two-over-one with at least 10 points, and those concentrated mainly in your suit. In all other cases bid one notrump. (NOTE: "Adequate trump support" for partner's minor suit implies a four-card holding, whereas a major suit may be raised on three to an honor.)

With 11 points or more, your first response must not be one notrump or a single raise of partner's suit.

With 11-13 points, you have a fair hand—enough for two encouraging bids. Respond in a new suit, and on the next round make a further encouraging bid; for example, bid two notrump over partner's rebid of one notrump, bid a new suit, or raise partner's suit.



With 13-17 points, you have a game hand, as the 26 points for game are assured. Make a game-forcing bid, or a one-round force followed by an eventual game bid. Bid two notrump with 13-15 points or three notrump with 16-18 points. Give partner a double raise with 13-16 points. Bid a new suit either at the one-level or two-level, followed by a bid to game. If partner shows any further signs of life, make a slam try with 16-17 points.

With 18 points and up, you are in the slam zone. 18 points brings the partnership to 31 points at least, only 2 points away from the 33-point goal. Make a game-forcing bid, a one-trick jump in a new suit. This informs partner that moderate added values will produce a slam. With 21 points up, a slam contract should ordinarily be insisted upon.

## CHAPTER 11

# Two-Bids and Responses

In my 1949 *Gold Book*, page 135, I write: "An opening two-bid should seldom be even considered unless the hand . . . is not more than one trick short of a certain game . . ."

But the "one trick short of game" formula is too general. Accordingly, in the Culbertson honor-trick method of valuation this problem was definitely solved by a neat compact rule: You must have *more honor-tricks than losers*. The rule had a remarkable success, for it gave to bridge players the one thing they prize above all—security in precision. Now, if we had some such rule for two-bids in point-count valuation this vexing and important problem would be solved.

In the Culbertson point-count bidding method such a rule has been devised. Here is how it works:

### Rule of 24\*

#### High-Card Points:

Count all the high cards by the 4-3-2-1 count; except count only 2 for a King, and only 1 for a Queen, if you do not have another high card (A, K, Q, or J) in the same suit.

Add 1 point for each suit (trump or side) in which you have 100 honors.

Add 2 points for each suit (trump or side) in which you have 150 honors.

#### Length Points:

Count 2 points for each card over *four* in a suit.

*If the total count is 24 points or more you have a two-bid.*

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\* I am indebted to Hy Lavinthal, on whose original suggestion this Rule is based. See the *Gold Book*, page 138 (1949 edition).

The Rule of 24 applies to all bidding situations, to all distributions and to all point-count methods.\*

Examples:

	Honor Points	Length Points
1. ♠ A K 10 9 7 6 4 3	7	8
♥ A Q J	7	
♦ K x	2	
♣ —		
	—	—
	16	+ 8 = 24 points

24 points. You have a forcing two-bid. Note that the diamond King is valued at 2 points.

	Honor Points	Length Points
2. ♠ A K 10 8 6 2	7	4
♥ A K 6 5	7	
♦ A 5	4	
♣ 4		
	—	—
	18	+ 4 = 22 points

22 points. Not enough for a forcing two-bid.

	Honor Points	Length Points
3. ♠ A Q 5 4 2	6	2
♥ A K 7	7	
♦ A K 5	7	
♣ 6 3		
	—	—
	20	+ 2 = 22 points

22 points. Far short for a forcing two-bid. Notice now the enormous difference (and the precision of the Rule of 24) when a Jack-ten is substituted for two low spades.

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\* Even a simpler (though not quite as accurate) variation of the Rule of 24 is to dispense with the reduction of a King and a Queen by 1 point in which case the requirement for a two-bid would be 25 points in any hand containing an unsupported King or Queen.

	Honor Points	Length Points
4. ♠ A Q J 10 5	8	2
♥ A K 7	7	
♦ A K 5	7	
♣ 6 3		
	<hr/> 22	<hr/> 2 = 24 points

24 points. A sound forcing two-bid. 1 extra point is taken for the 100 honors.

With four-card suits (and the Rule of 24 is the only one that also covers four-card suits) possessing the requirements of 24 points avoid bidding two in a suit with the distribution 4-3-3-3. For example,

	Points		Points
1. ♠ A K J 6	8	2. ♠ A K J 6	8
♥ A Q J 6	7	♥ A Q J	7
♦ K Q 10 7	5	♦ K Q 6	5
♣ A	4	♣ A 7 6	4
	<hr/> 24		<hr/> 24
24 points. Bid two spades.		24 points but bid two notrump.	

### Response to Two-Bids

On the basis of the Rule of 24 there are two kinds of responses: negative with two notrump; positive with 7 points or more, shaded down to 6 points with a suit headed by A Q. Any positive response indicates the possibility of a slam and should be explored.  $24 + 7 = 31$  points.

After a positive response by partner revalue your hand by applying the Rule of Three and Four.

The recommended responses to two-bids are natural responses—except for the negative response of two notrump. This latter bid is used to indicate a hand with less than 7 points. With no points at all the responder must, of course, still bid two notrump, since the bidding must be kept open until game is reached.

In order to make a “positive” (encouraging) response, a player should hold, as a rule, a minimum of 7 points in high cards including at least one Ace or one King. However, this may be shaded to 6 points

where a suit headed by Ace-Queen is held, or even to 5 points with Ace-Jack to five or more where the suit can be shown at the two-level. If partner opens two hearts, bid two spades holding:

♠ A J 6 4 3    ♥ 7 5 2    ♦ 6 4    ♣ 7 5 4

Responses may be of three types:

1. A raise of partner's suit. This is one of the most helpful responses to partner. 7 points including one Ace or one King are required, with adequate support for partner's suit. As the bid is forcing, there is no upper limit of values.

For example, partner bids two hearts. You hold:

♠ 7 2 (1)    ♥ Q 6 5 3 (2)    ♦ K J 7 2 (4)    ♣ 5 4 3

7 points, 1 honor-trick. Bid three hearts.

♠ 7 6    ♥ Q 5 4 3 (2)    ♦ Q J 6 5 (4)    ♣ Q 4 3 (2)

8 points, 1 honor-trick. Bid two notrump. The hand has no Ace or King.\*

♠ 8    ♥ K 7 6 5 (4)    ♦ A 4 2 (4)    ♣ Q 6 5 4 3 (4)

12 points, 1½ + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

2. A jump in notrump. The jump to three notrump shows a count of 7-9 points in high cards, but no biddable suit or raise for partner. With higher counts, bid five or six notrump.

For example, partner bids two hearts. You hold:

♠ K 7 5 (3)    ♥ 6 4    ♦ 7 6 5 3    ♣ A 6 5 2 (4)

7 points, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

♠ A 7 4 (4)    ♥ J 6 (1)    ♦ K J 3 (4)    ♣ 7 6 5 3 2

9 points, 1½ + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

3. A takeout in a new suit. This bid indicates a biddable suit and usually 7 points including an Ace or King. Where the hand includes

\* In the Culbertson System (See *Gold Book*, page 141) a special convention is provided under which responder may *double-raise* an opening two-bid (e.g., bid four hearts in response to partner's two-heart opening) when holding: five trumps, or four trumps to the Queen, if he does *not* have a singleton or any honor higher than a Queen in his hand. To quote from my own *Gold Book*:

"This is a neat little inference enabling the opener to stop dead in his tracks short of a dangerous slam; or, if strong enough to bid a slam without assistance, to decide whether to bid six or seven.

"*Caution:* Do not use this weak double-raise unless you are *sure* partner will not take it to be a sign of strength."

support for partner, the suit should be shown first and the raise given later.

For example, partner bids two diamonds. You hold:

♠ Q J 7 5 2 (4)    ♥ 4 3    ♦ 6 5    ♣ K 4 3 2 (4)

8 points. Bid two spades.

♠ A K Q 7 6 (11)    ♥ 5 3    ♦ K 4 3 2 (4)    ♣ 6 5

15 points. Bid two spades.

♠ A Q 7 6 (6)    ♥ J 5 4 3 (1)    ♦ 3 2    ♣ 7 6 4

7 points. Bid two spades.

♠ 7 6 4    ♥ 5 3 2    ♦ 4 3    ♣ A Q 6 5 3 (7)

7 points. Bid three clubs.

NOTE: If your suit outranks partner's so that it can be bid without increasing the level, you may shade the requirements down to 6 or even 5 points. Thus, if partner bids two diamonds, for example, it is proper to respond with two spades, holding:

♠ A 7 5 4 3    ♥ 5 3    ♦ 8 5    ♣ 7 5 3 2

After the playing suit has been determined, Aces may then be shown by cue-bids, and once the Ace has been shown, a further bid in the suit shows the King.

If you wish to play "Ace Showing," the method is as follows:

### Ace Showing

A convention which has gained considerable popularity lately, is showing Aces immediately over two-bids, instead of showing strength and distribution. In certain exceptional hands this works remarkably well, but it is usually much more important to determine the strength and distribution prior to locating specific Aces.

With one Ace, including the Ace of trumps, bid that suit. With two Aces, bid four notrump. With distributed strength without an Ace, bid three notrump.

On all other hands, the first response must be two notrump, and the strength or weakness of the hand is clarified on later rounds of bidding.

## SUMMARY

## THE RULE OF 24 FOR OPENING TWO-BIDS

1. Count all high cards by the 4-3-2-1 count—without correction points; except: count only 2 points for a King and 1 for a Queen if you don't have another high card in the suit.

2. 100 Honors (in any suit or suits) 1 point.

150 Honors (in any suit or suits) 2 points.

3. Each card over four (in every suit) 2 points.

If the total count of your hand is 24 points or more, you have a TWO-BID.

## RESPONSES TO OPENING TWO-BIDS

With less than 7 points, bid two notrump.

With 7 points (in high cards) and up, including at least one Ace or one King, make a positive response. Raise partner's suit, 7 points and up. Jump to three notrump, 7-9 points and no biddable suit or raise for partner (with higher counts, bid five or six notrump). Take out in a new suit, 7 points and up with a biddable suit. (If hand also includes support for partner, show your suit first, then raise partner.)

## CHAPTER 12

# Opening Pre-emptive Bids

All opening suit-bids of three or four, and of five in a minor, are pre-emptive or shutout bids. Point-count is not useful in these hands, the main requirement being that a pre-empt should contain *winners* (playing tricks) in high and low cards. It should not contain more than 10 points in high cards. (Exception: in third or fourth position a hand strong in high cards may be opened four hearts or four spades, so long as it appears unlikely that a slam will be missed.)

To qualify as a pre-emptive bid, a hand should have a strong six or seven-card (or longer) suit, and should produce enough sure winners to be within two tricks of the bid if vulnerable, and within three tricks if not vulnerable (Rule of Two and Three).

The count of winners is fully explained in the *Gold Book*, page 32; but the following will give you an approximate count: Concede a lost trick to the opponents for each Ace, King or Queen they hold in your trump suit, or in any four-card suit (a pre-emptive bid should not be made if you have a side suit longer than four cards). But you never expect to lose more than two tricks in an eight-card suit, so the suit A-K-x-x-x-x-x is counted as eight winners.

This can *very roughly* be translated into point-count valuation. An opening three-bid in a six- or seven-card suit requires about 14-15 points if vulnerable, about 12-13 points if not vulnerable. With an eight-card suit you need about 2 points less. In arriving at your points you should count your trump suit as instructed on page 127; that is, 1 point for every card over three, plus 2 points for having a six-card or longer suit. Do not forget to add 1 point if you have 100 honors, as explained in Chapter 4.

An opening four-bid requires 2 points more than a three-bid in each case.



## Opening Three-Bids

The opening bid of three in a suit, especially in a minor suit, is not a very effective shutout because it is not a high enough bid. Care must be taken not to shut out partner if it is he, instead of the opponents, who has the game-going cards.

The danger is not very great when the three-bid is made in a major suit. If partner is strong, a contract of four in the major will likely offer as good a play for game as would three notrump. A minor-suit three-bid, however, may confront partner with a sheer guess; and he will have no time to explore the possibilities of different contracts, and still stay below the three-notrump level.

The requirements for an opening suit three-bid are:

*A long, strong trump suit of at least six and usually seven cards; and At least 7 winners if vulnerable, and at least 6 winners if not vulnerable.*

Whereas any sort of long trump suit will do for a major-suit three-bid (for example, a seven-card suit like Q 10 9 8 6 5 4), a minor-suit three-bid should not be made without two of the three top cards in the trump suit. For example, K Q x x x x x.

Then if partner has one of the three top honors in the minor suit, he can count on running the entire suit, six or seven winners, at notrump.

Examples of opening three-bids:

*If vulnerable:*

♠ 6   ♥ K Q J 8 7 4 3   ♦ J 10 9 5   ♣ 6	Three hearts
♠ Q J 9 7 6 4 3   ♥ 5 2   ♦ K Q J   ♣ 7	Three spades
♠ 6   ♥ 5 4   ♦ K Q J 8 6 3   ♣ Q J 10 4	Three diamonds

*If not vulnerable:*

♠ 10 9 6   ♥ 2   ♦ K 6   ♣ K Q 10 8 6 5 2	Three clubs
♠ J 9 8 6 5 4 3 2   ♥ 9 3   ♦ —   ♣ Q 8 3	Three spades

When you are third hand, even a minor-suit three-bid may be made on a suit lacking the top cards. Partner, having passed, will not be strong enough to bid three notrump; and the three-bid may be valuable in keeping the opponents out of their best spot.

## Responses to Opening Three-Bids

An opening three-bid shows a weak hand *and is usually passed*. It does not ask the responder to pass; the three-bidder, being human, hopes his partner will be strong enough to bid. But the responder seldom holds either the concentration of honor-tricks, or the perfect fit, that would warrant his bidding over such weakness as the opening three-bid announces.

A *raise* of a three-bid is based on the Rule of Two and Three. The opener has depended on his partner to supply two winners if vulnerable and three if not vulnerable. The responder counts his supporting winners and may raise once for every winner over two, if vulnerable, and for every winner over three, if not vulnerable.

In counting winners, the responder must limit himself to defensive tricks (see page 78) and ruffing tricks. (Again, the count of supporting winners may be found in the *Gold Book*, but as a rule of thumb you may count ruffing winners as follows: With a singleton, count one ruffing winner for each trump over *two*; with a void, count one ruffing winner for each trump over *one*.) Count no side lengths; you cannot expect to establish a side suit in time to use it. And seldom does a hand warrant raising a three-bid unless it includes at least one and preferably two Aces.

As for opening pre-emptive bids, you can very roughly use the point-count for raises of three-bids. You need 10 or more points to raise a major-suit three-bid to four, but in arriving at these points count only your trump suit plus the high cards in defensive honor-tricks in side suits.

♠ Q J 6 3   ♥ 10 7 6 5   ♦ 4   ♣ K Q 8 2

Partner bids three hearts. In *winners*, you can count only three: one for the defensive trick in clubs, and two ruffing tricks because you have a singleton with four trumps. If partner is not vulnerable, his six tricks plus your three will not reach to game. If partner is vulnerable he should have seven tricks, which with your three would produce game; but you have no Ace and you cannot count on your partner for an Ace, when he makes a pre-emptive bid, so the opponents may win four tricks with Aces. Pass, because you have an Aceless hand.

In points, you have only 6, counting 5 for the K-Q of clubs and 1 for heart length. The spade honors are a doubtful value. Again your hand falls short of a raise.

Trump support is not so important when partner opens with a three-

bid. Two small trumps are ample. A single Jack or Queen is as good as two trumps. Any of these holdings justifies a raise if there are enough winners in the hand. The following hands are good raises:

Raise three spades to four with:

♠ 63    ♥ AK6    ♦ 7653    ♣ AJ109

Raise a three-heart bid to four with:

♠ Q865    ♥ 103    ♦ 5    ♣ AKQ652

There is no reason to show the clubs on such a hand.

*Three notrump* is bid over partner's minor-suit three-bid with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  defensive tricks, including the Ace, King or Queen of partner's suit. Translating this into the point-count, you need the Ace, King or Queen of partner's suit and 9 points outside, with a stopper or near stopper (like 10-x-x-x or J-x-x) in each of the unbid suits. Three notrump is seldom bid over a major-suit three-bid.

Aces are important to the three-notrump takeout, as they are to the raise of a three-bid. The following hand is an excellent three-notrump bid when partner has opened with three diamonds:

♠ 10763    ♥ A62    ♦ K5    ♣ A953

If partner has seven diamonds to the A Q, the game can be run off except in the unlikely event that the defenders can start off with five spade tricks. But the following 12-point hand is a better pass:

♠ Q83    ♥ KQ54    ♦ K5    ♣ Q762

Even if the suit opened can be controlled, and seven diamonds run, the defenders will probably have the next five tricks in top cards. (And it may be only six diamonds.)

When the responder does bid three notrump over a major-suit three-bid, it is fairly obvious that he should. He will have 16 to 18 points, or he will have a long suit of his own, like this:

♠ 3    ♥ Q1095    ♦ A10    ♣ AKQJ85

Bid three notrump over partner's three spades, it being more likely that you will win nine tricks at notrump than ten tricks at spades, where there may be two spade and two heart tricks to lose.

*A suit takeout* of a three-bid should be made only in a suit that is close

to self-sufficient itself, and a strong hand with at least  $2\frac{1}{2}$  defensive tricks. There is little reason to bid a suit over a major-suit three-bid; there is much reason to bid a strong major over a minor-suit three-bid.

With the following hand, raise three spades to four, but bid three hearts over three diamonds:

♠ 7 5    ♥ A K 10 9 6 3    ♦ 5    ♣ K J 7 6

Pass the following hand, whatever partner's three-bid:

♠ 7 5    ♥ A K 10 9 6 3    ♦ 5 2    ♣ Q 6 3

Game is unlikely, and it is probable that partner's suit is stronger than the hearts.

### Opening Four-Bids

An opening four-bid is the same in a major or minor suit, with one exception. The major-suit four-bid may (but need not) have a little more in high cards.

A four-bid requires eight winners if vulnerable. Under the Rule of Two and Three, seven winners are enough if not vulnerable, but even when you are not vulnerable it is well to have eight winners, or at least a chance for eight winners ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  winners, or an extra Queen or J-10).

The trump suit for a four-bid is almost never less than seven cards in length.

Here are two typical four-bids, respectively vulnerable and non-vulnerable:

♠ 5    ♥ K J 10 9 7 6 5 3    ♦ Q J 10 3    ♣ —

(Bid four hearts, vulnerable or not.)

♠ 5    ♥ K J 10 9 7 6 5 3    ♦ Q J 7    ♣ 6

(Bid four hearts not vulnerable; three hearts if vulnerable.)

The second of the two hands may lose six tricks, and go down three at four hearts; but there is a possible eighth winner (since the heart suit may develop seven tricks, losing only to the Ace).

With a ready-made suit, the major-suit four-bid is proper, the minor-suit four-bid should be avoided. That ready-made suit may mean seven or eight tricks at notrump, and it is unwise to start off at the four-level, committing the side to an eleven-trick game contract or none.

Bid four hearts, vulnerable, or not, with:

♠ 2 ♥ AKQJ8753 ♦ 65 ♣ 93

but pass with:

♠ 87 ♥ 1093 ♦ AKQJ875 ♣ 10

♠ — ♥ 7 ♦ KJ1097653 ♣ KJ106

(Bid four diamonds, vulnerable or not.)

♠ Q10986542 ♥ 7 ♦ KQ5 ♣ 9

(Bid four spades not vulnerable; three spades or pass if vulnerable.)

♠ 5 ♥ 65 ♦ KQ10986542 ♣ 10

(Bid four diamonds, vulnerable or not.)

### Responses to Four-Bids

Partner must be very cautious about raising an opening four-bid past game. He may raise a minor-suit four-bid to game with three honor- or ruffing-winners, including two Aces, but should not raise any four-bid to six unless he has six quick winners when not vulnerable or five quick winners when vulnerable, including *three Aces*. He need have only two Aces if he has the King or Queen of the trump suit and a guarded King or a singleton in the fourth suit.

A conventional four-notrump bid should always be preferred to a mere raise of partner's major suit to five, and is usually better than a jump to six.

Partner opens with four hearts. Holding:

♠ KQJ ♥ 65 ♦ AKQ6 ♣ KQ104

Pass. Partner should not be expected to hold two Aces.

♠ A643 ♥ Q5 ♦ AKQ852 ♣ 5

Bid four notrump (conventional). If partner denies an Ace, stop at five hearts.

♠ KQ76 ♥ Q854 ♦ AKJ103 ♣ —

Bid six hearts. Freak hands justify exceptional treatment.

♠ AK105 ♥ KJ ♦ AQJ85 ♣ A5

Bid four notrump, and go to seven if partner shows the ♥ Ace.

### Minor-Suit Five-Bids

An opening bid of five in a minor suit is, like the four-bid, a pure shutout bid. Following the Rule of Two and Three, it requires nine winners if vulnerable, and *about nine* winners if not vulnerable.

An opening five-bid in a major suit is not a shutout bid but a slam try.

## CHAPTER 13

### Rebids by Opener

The main objective toward which contract bidding is directed is game (or equivalent penalties). As long as either partner feels game may be possible, he continues the bidding—even at some risk of being set.

Generally speaking, 26 points are required to provide a better-than-even play for game in notrump or a major suit. However, 25 points will produce, on an average, a 37-40% play for game, so that it is not disadvantageous here to get to game. When both sides are vulnerable, game should be bid with 25 points with a strong trump suit, so that a double is unlikely. The rather unusual minor suit game requires 29 points.

Of course, this does not mean that every time the partnership has 26 points a game should be bid. In addition to the 26 points, a satisfactory, playable contract must be found. For a satisfactory play in a major, at least eight trumps in the two hands are normally required, as well as some considerable strength in honors in the suit. Occasionally, with solid holdings, a good major game may be reached with only seven trumps, but this is the unusual case. If there is no satisfactory major suit contract, notrump will probably have to be the alternative. If notrump appears unplayable due to some weak suit, a part-score contract will have to be accepted, perhaps in a minor, despite the 26 points. Most of the time, however, it will be possible to play for game either at notrump or a major. When you hold a singleton or two small in partner's suit, and he does not raise your suit or bid notrump, a misfit is a probability, and the hand must be soft-pedaled even though your partner opened and you have 13 points.

For example, one spade by opener, two hearts by responder, two spades by opener. You, responder, hold:

♠ 8   ♥ A Q 7 5 3 (6)   ♦ K J 6 (4)   ♣ K 4 3 2 (3)

13 points, at notrump, 3 honor-tricks. Bid only two notrump.

To determine whether game should be bid, add your points to the points shown by partner. If you count to 26, and also can play at notrump or a major suit, either bid game or make a bid your partner cannot pass.

A good play for a slam requires 33 or 34 points, although 32 points may sometimes suffice if just the right cards are held. At notrump, slams can be bid accurately on point-count alone. At suit-bids, point-count is not the only consideration. Controls, strength of trump suit, possible duplication of values, must also be considered. However, it can be said that with 33 points a good play for slam is probable, and serious consideration should be given to a slam contract. With 37-38 points, a grand slam is a probability if all four first-round controls are held.

In some hands a stage may be reached in the bidding where the player is able to count his *losers* and can, therefore, tell what the correct final contract should be. At this juncture the counting of points (or, for that matter, of honor-tricks) should be abandoned, since the correct final contract is already known. Obviously this is much the simplest method where it can be applied. The slam hands on pages 140-41 are examples. Not infrequently it can be determined that the hand has only one loser in view of tricks partner has shown. Then there is no need for ascertaining whether the partnership has 33 points.

This two-bid is another example in point:

♠ A K Q 7 6 5 3 2    ♥ A J 10 9    ♦ 6    ♣ —

Here it can be seen that four-odd is cold. Furthermore, there are three first and one second-round controls. Although there are only three top tricks, the hand should obviously be opened as a two-bid—there is no need to count points.

Another example. North holds:

♠ A 4    ♥ K Q J 10 7 6 5    ♦ 3    ♣ K J 2

North bids one heart: partner responds with two clubs. North now knows that the hand should play at four hearts, so he bids it without bothering with further counts. The simplest way is the best. North should, of course, consider whether his hand is good enough for a slam if partner should insist on one; in this case, North has nothing to fear in that respect.

### Minimum Rebids: 12-15 Points

If partner makes a minimum limited response (one notrump or a single raise), pass. If partner makes a forcing bid—either to game or for one round—give your prepared response. If, after a one-round force, partner makes a second constructive bid, either pass or bid game, depending on how favorably you view your hand; with 13 you ordinarily should pass; with 14 or 15, go on to game.

In several situations a revaluation of your hand will be necessary. If you intend to raise partner's suit, *revalue your hand as dummy* (see page 23).

For example, opener, one heart; responder, one spade. You, opener, hold:

♠ Q 7 6 5 (3)    ♥ A Q 4 3 2 (8)    ♦ K J 6 (4)    ♣ 5

15 points in support of spades. Bid two spades. About 14 points, or one more than minimum, is needed to raise the responder's suit.

In revaluing your hand for rebidding, *count unsupported honors at face value if the contract is to be notrump, or if the honor is in a suit bid by partner.*

For example, the bidding has been:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♠	2 ♣
2 ♠	3 ♠

South holds:

♠ A Q J 7 6 (8)    ♥ A J 4 (5)    ♦ 5 3    ♣ 8 6 2

13 points (3 honor-tricks), gains 1 point on revaluation = 14 points. Bid four spades; partner has shown 11-12 points.

The bidding has been:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♠	2 ♣
2 ♥	3 ♥

South holds:

♠ A K J 6 (8)    ♥ A 10 5 3 (5)    ♦ 7 6 2    ♣ 5 4

13 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Pass. Hand remains at 13 points, and trump suit is very weak.



The bidding has been:

SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♣	1 ♠
1 NT	2 NT

South holds:

♠ Q 7 6 (1) ♥ A 5 3 (4) ♦ K 6 2 (3) ♣ A J 4 3 (5)  
13 points original valuation for suit-bid. (3 honor-tricks.) However, valued for notrump, no deduction is made for unsupported Queen. So the hand is worth 14 points; bid three notrump. Partner has shown 11-12 points.

Same bidding, South holds:

♠ 7 6 2 ♥ A J 5 ♦ J 4 3 ♣ A K 6 2  
13 points. Pass two notrump.

When partner responds with one in a suit, your rebid should be one notrump if your hand is balanced. Even with a five-card suit this usually gives a better picture than rebidding the suit, and it is also safer.

For example, South opened one diamond; North responded one heart. South holds:

♠ A 7 (4) ♥ 6 5 ♦ A J 4 3 2 (6) ♣ K J 7 6 (5)  
15 points, 3 honor-tricks. Bid one notrump rather than two clubs or two diamonds.

Show a second suit if possible instead of rebidding a five-card suit, unless the five-card suit is so strong as to be playable opposite a singleton.

For example, South opened one heart; North responded one spade. South holds:

♠ K 6 (3) ♥ A J 7 5 3 (6) ♦ A 10 5 4 (5) ♣ 3 2  
14 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid two diamonds. There is no protection in clubs, so one notrump is undesirable. A minimum rebid in a lower-ranking suit is merely a distribution-showing bid and does not necessarily require extra points.

Same bidding: South holds:

♠ 6 5 ♥ A K J 10 4 (9) ♦ A 10 7 3 (5) ♣ 6 2  
14 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Rebid two hearts. The hand will play better at hearts opposite a singleton than in diamonds opposite three small.

When partner gives a single raise, you should pass with hands in this range.

When partner bids one notrump you should pass with a balanced hand. (4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, 5-4-2-2.) With an unbalanced hand it will usually pay to make a rebid purely for the purpose of getting into a better contract.

For example, South opened one heart; North responded one notrump. South holds:

♠ 7 6   ♥ A Q 5 4 3 (7)   ♦ K J 6 (4)   ♣ Q J 5 (3)

14 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Pass.

♠ 6   ♥ A Q 5 4 3 (7)   ♦ K J 7 6 (5)   ♣ Q J 5 (3)

15 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Bid two diamonds.

### Constructive Rebids: 16-19 Points

If partner gives a single raise, rebid to three of same suit with 17-18 points. Partner may have 8-10 points, in which case he will continue to game (in a major suit). If partner bids one notrump, raise to two notrump with 18-19 points. Partner with 7-9 points will continue to three.

For example, South, one spade; North, two spades. South holds:

♠ A J 7 6 2 (6)   ♥ K Q 5 4 (6)   ♦ A J 3 (5)   ♣ 6

17 points,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Add one point on revaluation—18 points. Bid three spades.

Same bidding, South holds:

♠ A J 6 4 (5)   ♥ K Q 7 5 (6)   ♦ A Q J 6 (8)   ♣ 8

19 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts. It is always best over a single raise to rebid a new suit or notrump with only a four-card suit. This warns partner of danger in the trump suit, at the same time informing him of a strong hand. This bid is a one-round force.

South, one spade; North, two spades; South holds:

♠ A K J 7 6 5 (10)   ♥ A J 4 3 (6)   ♦ Q 2 (1)   ♣ 6

17 points, 4 honor-tricks. Note that three points are taken for distribution. Unsupported Queen loses a point. At original valuation of 17 points, only a three-spade bid would be indicated, as responder's possible minimum 6 points would make the count only 23. However, take 3 extra points on revaluation. This raises the count to 20, assuring 26 points, so four spades should be bid. Possible dummies might be:

♠ 10 7 6 4 (1) ♥ K 3 (3) ♦ 5 4 ♣ Q 6 5 4 3 (4)

8 points,  $\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick. Note: Hand is probably a laydown even if the clubs are of no value.

♠ Q 7 6 3 (3) ♥ 5 ♦ 5 4 3 2 (1) ♣ Q 6 5 3 (3)

7 points.  $\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick. Probably makes four.

♠ Q 7 6 2 (2) ♥ 5 4 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ K J 7 6 (5)

7 points, 1 honor-trick. Here, the four-spade contract will be down one. The clubs are useless, and the Queen of spades is an unnecessary card. There is no way to avoid these results at times; this is an illustration of "duplication of values."

South, one spade; North, two spades; South holds:

♠ A J 7 6 2 (6) ♥ K Q 4 (5) ♦ A 5 3 (4) ♣ 8 2

15 points, 3 + honor-tricks, plus 1 on revaluation = 16 points. Pass.

South, one spade, North, one notrump; South holds:

♠ A Q 7 5 (6) ♥ Q 4 (2) ♦ A J 3 2 (5) ♣ A J 6 (5)

18 points, 4 + honor-tricks. (Note: Queen is counted at face value for notrump, but no credit is taken for distribution.) Bid two notrump. Without the Jack of clubs, pass.

A one-over-one rebid is always advisable with this type of hand when it is available. Such a bid might have as much as 20 points as a maximum.

For example, South, one diamond; North, one heart. South holds:

♠ K Q 7 5 (6) ♥ A 3 (4) ♦ A K Q 6 2 (10) ♣ 5 4

20 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Rebid one spade. Partner should respond unless he bid on less than 7 points.

We have seen that a two-level rebid in a suit lower-ranking than the player's first call may be made on a minimum hand. However, it is somewhat more encouraging than a rebid in the same suit, if only because it opens up a second line of investigation. This type of rebid may show as much as 18-19 points.

For example, South, one heart; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ 8 3 ♥ A K J 6 2 (9) ♦ 5 4 ♣ A K Q 7 (10)

19 points. Bid two clubs in preference to rebidding hearts. Partner is more likely to find a second bid over two clubs.

When partner makes a minimum takeout of two in a new suit, a

rebid of two notrump is a good encouraging bid if your hand is suitable for notrump. This indicates from 15-17 points and may be shaded to 14 in high cards where there is no other rebid.

For example, South, one spade; North, two clubs; South holds:

♠ A Q 7 2 (6) ♥ A 6 5 (4) ♦ K J 4 3 (4) ♣ J 6 (1)  
15 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

♠ A K 7 2 (7) ♥ K Q 4 (5) ♦ A J 5 3 (5) ♣ 8 7  
17 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump. With 17\*-20 points bid three notrump.

With 18-20 points you may reverse at the two-level. That is, bid a higher-ranking suit than the one you bid first, e.g., one club, one notrump, *two spades*; or one club, one spade, *two hearts*. This sort of rebid should be used only to picture the hand's distribution. A reverse should not be used merely to indicate a strong hand; there are plenty of other ways of doing this.

A reverse at the two-level, accordingly, is presumed to indicate that the first-bid suit is longer. Occasionally, a reverse may be made with suits of equal length for convenience, particularly after opening with one club, but this is not the usual procedure.

For example, South, one diamond; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ K 6 (3) ♥ A Q J 7 (8) ♦ A Q J 5 3 (8) ♣ 4 2  
19 points, 4 honor-tricks. Bid two hearts.

With 18-20 points, bid a new suit at the three-level. This bid indicates that your first suit is at least a five-card suit.

SOUTH

NORTH

1 ♠

2 ♥

South holds:

♠ A K 7 6 4 (8) ♥ 5 3 ♦ A K Q 4 (10) ♣ 8 6  
18 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

♠ A K Q 7 5 (10) ♥ K 6 (3) ♦ 4 ♣ K Q 10 6 3 (7)  
20 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid three clubs. 20 points is the upper limit for this bid.

With good four-card support for partner's major (Q x x x or better)

\* With 17 points, opener should use his judgment as to whether to bid two or three notrump. A good fit in partner's suit would incline him to the latter course.

and 17-19 points in support, give partner a double raise. This bid is a strong urge, though not a force.

For example, South, one diamond; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ K J 7 6 (5)    ♥ 5    ♦ A Q 4 3 2 (8)    ♣ A 6 3 (4)

17 points,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

### Powerful Hands: 19 Points and Over

Opening bids of more than one (two-bids, two and three-notrump bids) in this range have already been considered. However, opening bids of one in a suit may go as high as 24 points, when unsuitable for a two-notrump bid or a suit two-bid.

With 18-20 points and a notrump type hand, make a jump two-notrump rebid over partner's one-over-one response, and with 20-22 points, jump to three notrump.

For example, South, one heart; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ Q 6 (2)    ♥ A K 5 4 (7)    ♦ K Q 3 (5)    ♣ A J 6 2 (5)

19 points,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

Same bidding, South holds:

♠ K 7 (3)    ♥ A K J 5 (8)    ♦ K Q 4 (5)    ♣ A J 3 2 (5)

21 points, 5 honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

With 19-22 points, bid game in a major over partner's single raise.

For example, South, one spade; North, two spades. South holds:

♠ A J 7 5 4 (6)    ♥ K Q 6 3 (6)    ♦ A K 7 (7)    ♣ 5

19 points plus 1 on revaluation = 20 points.  $4\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

With 19-21 points and adequate trump support, jump partner's major suit response to four.

For example, South, one diamond; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ K J 7 6 (5)    ♥ 8    ♦ A Q J 5 4 (9)    ♣ A Q 3 (6)

20 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

With 19-21 points (revalued) and a sufficiently strong trump suit, a jump rebid to three should be made in your original suit. The trump suit should be such that two small trumps will be adequate support. Such suits are the following (or others of equivalent strength).

A K x x x x  
 K Q J x x x  
 A J 10 9 x x  
 Q J 10 9 x x  
 A K Q x x x  
 K Q J 10 x

When your suit is strong enough for this purpose you should revalue your hand as if your partner had supported you. That is, count 1 point for each card over three in every suit, and take 2 added points for a six-card or longer suit.

For example, South, one heart; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ 6 5 ♥ A K Q 4 3 2 (11) ♦ A K 6 (7) ♣ 5 4  
 18 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Plus 3 added points on revaluation = 21 points. Bid three hearts.

♠ 6 5 ♥ A K J 10 4 (9) ♦ A J 3 2 (6) ♣ A 7 (4)  
 19 points, 4½ + honor-tricks. Plus 1 point on revaluation = 20 points. Bid three hearts.

With 22-23 points and a trump suit strong enough to play opposite a singleton, jump to game in your major suit.

For example, South, one spade; North, two clubs. South holds:

♠ A K 7 6 5 3 2 (10) ♥ 5 4 ♦ A K (7) ♣ K 6 (3)  
 20 points, 4½ + honor-tricks. Plus 3 points on revaluation = 23 points. Bid four spades.

In other situations, with 21 points or over, a forcing takeout is in order. This is a rebid of one trick more than necessary in a new suit. This bid is forcing to game, and suggests a slam if partner has a fair hand. When holding powerful support for partner's suit and more than 21 points, the force may be made without a real suit. In other circumstances, however, a fairly good second suit would be indicated.

For example, South, one spade; North, one notrump. South holds:

♠ K Q J 7 6 3 (8) ♥ A K Q 6 5 (11) ♦ 8 ♣ 3  
 19 points, 3½ + honor-tricks. Add 3 points on revaluation. 22 points. Bid three hearts.

♠ A Q J 6 (7) ♥ A K 10 5 (8) ♦ A Q 4 2 (7) ♣ 3  
 22 points, 5½ honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

South, one diamond; North, one spade. South holds:

♠ A Q J 6 (8) ♥ A K 5 (7) ♦ A J 4 3 2 (7) ♣ 6  
 22 points in support of spades, 5 + honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

South, one diamond; North, one notrump. South holds:

♠ K Q J 6 (7)    ♥ 8    ♦ A K Q 5 4 (10)    ♣ A Q 3 (6)  
 23 points. 5 + honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

A reverse of two spades is a strong bid but is *not forcing*. With this powerhouse, no option of passing can be allowed partner. The jump in spades, contrary to popular impression, does not indicate a five-card suit, and partner should not, as a rule, raise spades without four trumps. The hand is short of a two-bid, which requires 25 points with a five-card suit.

## SUMMARY

### REBIDS BY OPENING BIDDER

Revalue your hand (*a*) when raising partner's suit, as if you were the responding hand; (*b*) if partner raises your suit, count 1 point for each card in your suit over *three*. (See page 22.)

12-13 points. You have a bare minimum. Your first rebid will be a minimum one: one notrump, one in a new suit, or a rebid of your suit, or a single raise of partner's suit. You will not bid a game unless partner forces you.

14-16 points. You are still in the minimum zone. Your first rebid will be a minimum one. Should partner respond with two-over-one, you are prepared to bid two notrump with 15-17 points, or raise his suit to the three-level. Do not make an encouraging bid (a jump or a reverse), but bid game if partner invites it.

16-19 points. You have a good hand. Make an encouraging rebid directly if your hand calls for it, such as a jump raise in partner's suit with 17-19 points, a reverse with 18-20 points, a new suit at the three-level with 18-20 points, a rebid in your own suit over partner's raise with 16-19 points. Or make a "waiting" rebid first, with the intention of bidding again. A waiting rebid may be a one-over-one with 12-19 points, or two in a lower ranking suit with 13-19 points.

20 points up. Your hand is a powerful one. Game is either assured or highly probable if partner responded. You have opened with two notrump with 22-24 points, or three notrump with 25-27 points, or a two-bid using the Rule of 24 with 24 points or more, if your hand fulfilled the requirements. Otherwise, you opened with one in a suit with 19-24 points. On the second round make a game-forcing bid—a single jump in a new suit with 21 points and up.

Jump to two notrump or three notrump over partner's response of one with 19-20 and 21-22 points respectively.

Bid three notrump over partner's bid of two in a suit with 17-21 points, and three notrump over one notrump with 20-22 points.

Bid game in your own suit over partner's single raise with 20-22 points, revalued.

Make a jump bid in your own suit with 19-21 points revalued, or a jump to four in your own suit with 22-24 points revalued.

Jump partner's suit to four with 19-21 points revalued.



## CHAPTER 14

# Rebids by Responder

### 5-10 Point Hands

When responder's hand is in the minimum range (6-10 points), rebidding is fairly simple. If you have made a limited response—one notrump, or a single raise of opener's suit—your partner is likely to pass, leaving no further problem. If he makes an encouraging rebid, he announces that in spite of your weakness he is interested in game. You should, therefore, carry him to game with 8-10 points, but decline the invitation with 6 and usually with 7 points.

For example, North, one heart; South, one notrump; North, two notrump. You, South, hold:

♠ K 7 6    ♥ 5 3 2    ♦ A 5 4    ♣ 7 6 5 3

7 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Partner's rebid shows 18-19 points. You, therefore, have a borderline holding, as your side will have 25 or 26 points. The suggested bid is three notrump, as you may make the contract with 25 points if you are lucky, and should probably make it with 26. With the King of diamonds instead of the Ace, pass.

North, one heart; South, one notrump; North, two hearts; or, North, one heart; South, one notrump; North, two diamonds—neither the two-heart bid nor the two-diamond bid made by North is extremely encouraging. However, partner might have a fairly nice hand, 16 or 17 points. With 6-8 points, you should pass or give a preference. With 9 or 10 points, bid two notrump or raise.

For example, North, one spade; South, one notrump; North, two spades. You, South, hold:

♠ 7 5 3    ♥ Q 10 4 3 (2)    ♦ K 6 2 (3)    ♣ K 5 4 (3)

8 points, 1 + honor-tricks. Pass.

♠ Q 6 3 (2)    ♥ K 5 4 (3)    ♦ A 7 2 (4)    ♣ 6 5 4 2

9 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

North, one spade; South, one notrump; North, two hearts. You, South, hold:

♠ Q 6 5 (2) ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ A 6 3 (4) ♣ Q 5 4 3 (2)

8 points, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid two spades.

♠ Q 6 (2) ♥ Q 7 5 3 (2) ♦ A 4 2 (4) ♣ 6 5 4 2 (1)

9 points in support of hearts, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid three hearts.

If partner "reverses" over one notrump, you should keep the bidding open with 7 or more points, as his bid indicates 18-20 points.

For example, North, one diamond; South, one notrump; North, two spades. You, South, hold:

♠ 8 5 2 ♥ K 6 5 4 (3) ♦ Q 7 (2) ♣ Q 10 6 3 (2)

7 points, 1 honor-trick. Bid two notrump.

♠ 7 5 3 ♥ K 6 4 2 (3) ♦ Q 7 (2) ♣ J 6 5 3 (1)

6 points. Pass.

♠ J 6 4 2 (1) ♥ Q 5 4 3 (3) ♦ K 6 (3) ♣ 7 4 3

7 points in support of spades, ½ + honor-trick. Bid three spades.

♠ 6 5 ♥ Q 7 4 3 (2) ♦ Q 6 5 3 (2) ♣ Q 7 6 (2)

6 points, ½ + honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds—a mere preference bid.

♠ J 7 6 (1) ♥ Q 5 3 (2) ♦ Q 4 3 (2) ♣ J 5 4 2 (1)

6 points, ½ honor-trick. Pass. Though diamonds may be a better spot, there is no use in getting a trick higher with this holding.

NOTE: Four trumps must be held to justify raising a reverse bid.

When you have given partner a single raise and he rebids to three of the same suit, you should pass with 6 points and usually with 7 (borderline holding), but go on to four with 8-10.

If over your raise, partner rebids a new suit, this is a one-round force. If you can do nothing else, you must take partner back to his first suit. This bid, in a new suit, though showing a strong hand, is likely to indicate doubt about the trump suit. Consequently, with only three trumps, it is well to be careful about jumping to four in that suit, even with maximum points.

For example, North, one spade; South, two spades; North, three hearts. You, South, hold:

♠ Q 6 5 (2) ♥ 6 4 3 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ A 7 5 3 (5)

7 points for hearts, 1 + honor-trick. Bid four hearts. Game will be hard

to make, but four hearts will probably be as good a contract as three spades; you are not permitted to pass.

North, one spade; South, two spades; North, three clubs. You, South, hold:

♠ K 7 5 4 (4)    ♥ A 6 3 2 (5)    ♦ 8 5 2    ♣ 6 4

9 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

♠ K 7 3 (2)    ♥ A Q 5 (6)    ♦ 7 6 4 3 2 (2)    ♣ 6 5

10 points at spades (2 honor-tricks) and 9 at notrump. Bid three notrump, not four spades.

♠ Q 7 3 (1)    ♥ A 6 (4)    ♦ 5 4 3 2 (1)    ♣ J 6 4 3 (2)

8 points for spades, 1 + honor-trick. Bid only three spades; your trumps are too weak for a stronger bid, since partner has not rebid the suit. You cannot pass three clubs, and four clubs might simply push the hand to four spades.

When partner's rebid is two notrump, he indicates a strong hand, 17-19 points, but also the probability of a four-card suit. Consequently, if a three-trump raise has been given, the suit should be abandoned. With 8 or more points for notrump, raise to three notrump. Show another five-card suit, or pass with less—the two notrump bid is not forcing. With good four-card support and 8 or more points, jump to four in partner's suit.

For example, North, one spade; South, two spades; North, two notrump. You, South, hold:

♠ Q 6 5 3 (3)    ♥ 4    ♦ A 5 3 2 (5)    ♣ 6 5 3 2 (1)

9 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

♠ Q 4 2 (1)    ♥ 6    ♦ A 7 4 3 2 (6)    ♣ 6 5 4 3 (1)

8 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

♠ Q 7 4 3 (3)    ♥ 6    ♦ Q 5 4 3 (3)    ♣ 6 4 3 2 (1)

7 points,  $\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick. Bid three spades.

♠ Q 5 2 (2)    ♥ 7 4    ♦ A 6 4 3 (4)    ♣ K 5 4 2 (3)

9 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

♠ Q 7 2 (1)    ♥ 6 5    ♦ A J 4 3 (6)    ♣ 6 4 3 2 (1)

8 points,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Pass.

When you have made a one-over-one response with less than 9 points, or a bid of two in a new suit on 9 points, pass partner's next

bid as a rule, or give a preference, unless he forces or makes a strong rebid.

### 10-13 Point Hands

This is the range of encouraging responses—hands strong enough to invite partner to bid a game, but too weak to insist that game be reached. If partner makes a minimum rebid, make a further rebid encouraging him to continue to game.

For example, North, one club; South, one heart; North, one no-trump. You, South, hold:

♠ Q 7 4 (2)    ♥ A Q 5 3 (6)    ♦ K 6 4 2 (3)    ♣ 7 6

11 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump. With 11 points, a further effort toward game should be made.

North, one club; South, one spade; North, two clubs. You, South, hold:

♠ A 10 5 3 2 (5)    ♥ 6 4 3    ♦ A 7 2 (4)    ♣ 6 4

9 points, 2 honor-tricks. Pass. 9 points is not enough for a further constructive bid, and the hand is likely to play as well at two clubs as at two spades.

North, one diamond; South, one heart; North, two hearts. You, South, hold:

♠ 6 5    ♥ A Q 10 7 4 (8)    ♦ 6 3 2    ♣ K 5 4 (3)

11 points, 2 honor-tricks. (Note: One extra point for the hearts, on re-valuation.) Bid three hearts. Partner may have only 14 points, in which case he can pass, as the partnership will have only 25. With more, he will continue to game.

Substitute the Ace of clubs for the King, and four hearts should be bid. 12 points plus 14 gives the required 26.

North, one spade; South, two hearts; North, three hearts. You, South, hold:

♠ 6 3    ♥ A Q 10 7 4 (8)    ♦ 5 4 3    ♣ K 6 2 (3)

11 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid four hearts. Partner, by raising to the three-level, has guaranteed a minimum of 15 points; this, added to your 11, makes 26.

North, one heart; South, two clubs; North, two notrump. You, South, hold:

♠ 7 3   ♥ K 6 5 (3)   ♦ 7 3 2   ♣ A K 6 5 3 (8)

11 points, 2 1/2 honor-tricks. Bid three hearts. You have enough for game, as partner has shown at least 15 points. He will not pass three hearts, as he knows your bid indicates about 11, and this, with his 15, makes 26.

When partner makes an encouraging rebid, you naturally go on to game; the only question here is whether a slam might be possible. With 10-11 points, a slam would be a possibility only if partner makes a game-forcing bid.

However, with 12-13 points a slam might be possible if partner jumped to three notrump, jumped to three or four in his own suit, or raised your suit to game. A slam try should be given in these cases, if the hand fits reasonably well.

### 13-17 Point Hands

This represents the game range if partner's opening bid is in the minimum range. In this zone you may have solved your problem by showing your strength on the first round, that is, by a jump in notrump or a jump raise. The further bidding is then up to partner. The only remaining problem will be whether to bid a slam if partner makes a slam try. If your hand is near the maximum (15-17 points), you bid the slam; if near minimum (13-15 points), you decline the invitation. If your first response was a one-round force, bid game or make a second forcing bid.

For example, North, one heart; South, two diamonds, North, two hearts. You, South, hold:

♠ Q J 7 (3)   ♥ 6 5   ♦ A Q J 4 3 (8)   ♣ K J 6 (4)

15 points, 3 1/2 honor-tricks. Bid three notrump. 15 points should be enough to overcome the possible misfit in diamonds and hearts. Substitute a small spade for the Queen (13 points) and only two notrump should be bid.

North, one spade; South, two hearts; North, two spades. You, South, hold:

♠ A J 7 (4)   ♥ K Q 7 5 3 (7)   ♦ K 6 4 (3)   ♣ 5 2

14 points in support of spades, 2 1/2 + honor-tricks. Bid four spades; the partnership should have 26 points.

### 18-Point Hands and Over

This represents the slam zone. Eighteen or 19 points, of course, will not produce a slam if partner's hand is a minimum, but will still bring

the total up to 31 or 32, which is close enough to justify a strong try, leaving it to partner to bid the slam if he is a few points above a minimum. Responder's proper procedure is a game-forcing takeout in a new suit—a jump of one trick more than necessary to overcall.

In rebidding, the responder should revalue his hand in the same manner as the opener bidder. He should revalue his hand as dummy if he intends to support a second suit bid by partner (see page 23).

For example, North, one spade; South, two clubs; North, two hearts. South holds:

♠ 6   ♥ K 5 4 3 (4)   ♦ J 6 2 (1)   ♣ A K 7 5 3 (8)

13 points opposite a spade bid,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Not enough to insist on game, in view of a possible misfit. However, when partner bids two hearts, the hand gains a point, and a fit is assured. Bid four hearts; three hearts would be inadequate.

## CHAPTER 15

# Slam Bidding

The point-count offers a very accurate method for bidding slams at notrump—a subject already covered under Notrump Bidding (see Chapter 7).

Slams in a suit, however, cannot be bid solely on the basis of point-count. In addition, consideration must be given to controls, adequate strength in the trump suit, and the danger of duplication of values.

However, point-count is of great value in indicating the *probability* of a slam. Thirty-three to thirty-four points are likely to produce a slam, and when the partnership bidding shows that this number of points is held, serious consideration should be given to a slam contract. This number of points will usually contain the necessary controls and a good trump suit. Ace controls can be checked by the Blackwood Convention. If the trump suit appears shaky, a better contract may be sought, but if none is available it may be better to stop short of slam.

Duplication of values must be kept in mind. Sometimes the probability of duplication can be visualized and the slam avoided. In other cases it is a pure guess whether duplication is present.

By far the most important phase of bidding a slam is completed at or below the game level. In most cases one partner or the other will know by the time game is reached whether or not a slam is probable, so he will simply bid the slam or pass. In some cases, however, further exploration may be necessary to determine whether two tricks are off the hand. A bid beyond game should be made only when the higher contract is judged to be reasonably secure. In a high percentage of such cases a slam should eventually be reached. An ultimate contract of five in a major or notrump is something ordinarily to be avoided, but a certain number of hands have to be played at such contracts.

The methods of exploring the ground beyond game are the following:

1. Cue-bids at the five-level. These invite partner either to show any

unannounced strength by a cue-bid of his own, or to jump to slam if he has added values and has no reason to fear two losers. Failing this, he should sign off by bidding the minimum in the suit agreed upon. Such a cue-bid, beyond game, is to be assumed by partner to be "honest," but actually it may not be; it may be a bid in the suit which the cue-bidder fears most in order to induce a favorable lead. The cue-bidder is the "captain" here and makes the slam try in whatever manner he judges best to promote a successful outcome. However, if the other partner elects to cue-bid in return, he should give only honest information.

2. A bid to five in the major suit agreed on. This definitely passes the decision to partner. Partner should go on to six with added values or if he considers his values particularly favorable for a slam. (Aces are the most desirable holding in this situation; also, very strong trumps.)

3. A check for Aces by bidding the Blackwood four notrump. In most cases the Blackwood is useful only for checking controls. That is, the player initiating this bid feels that the hand should probably play at a slam, but he wishes to make certain that the partnership has the necessary controls. He is not interested in further vague values in partner's hand; the bidding has already disclosed sufficient values for the slam. But are they *right* values? If the values are Kings, Queens, and singletons, and two Aces are missing, the slam cannot be made. To justify the use of Blackwood, a player should feel that a slam contract is in the cards if the values already shown by partner include the necessary Aces. If further values, as well as Aces, are needed, the Blackwood should not be employed, but rather a cue-bid or a five-bid. Or a player may be confident about Aces, but may nevertheless feel that partner must have some added values to insure the slam. In this case, also, Blackwood should not be employed.

### Intermediate Slam Tries

As stated before, contracts above game but less than slam are obviously undesirable, as some slight risk is usually involved even in what appear to be iron-bound contracts. In order to avoid these contracts as far as possible, intermediate slam tries, that is, suggestions of a slam below or at the game level, are used.

1. Any bid showing a high count should be construed as a mild invitation to slam.



An opening two bid—21-26 points, an opening two-notrump or three-notrump bid—22-24 points and 25-27 points respectively, may be considered as mild slam suggestions. Any game-forcing takeout is also an invitation. One of the main advantages of forcing bids is to indicate immediately the possibility of a slam, and thus make unnecessary wild jumps later on—possibly beyond game—in order to show fully the hand's great strength.

Certain jumps to game also suggest the possibility of a slam. A raise of responder's suit to game by the opener is a mild try.

North, one diamond; South, one spade; North, four spades; or, North, one spade; South, two hearts; North, four hearts. A jump by opener to game in his own suit is a slam try—North, one spade; South, two hearts; North, four spades. So is a jump to three notrump by either opener or responder, except where his partner has so limited his hand as to preclude the possibility of 33 points.

An under-game slam try may also be made by bidding a new suit, where another suit has been established as the playing suit. For instance, North, one heart; South, three hearts; North, four clubs. The bid of four clubs cannot serve any useful purpose as far as getting to game is concerned. Consequently it is reserved for suggesting a slam. The opener is saying that he has considerably more than a minimum—too much to close the bidding by a four-heart bid, but not enough to justify going to five by himself. If partner signs off with four hearts, there will be no slam. A similar try may sometimes be made where a single raise has been given. North, one spade; South, two spades; North, three diamonds. This, of course, is normally not a slam try at all, and as far as partner knows is merely a mild effort to get to game. But opener may have such a big hand that if partner has a maximum raise, say 9 or 10 points, there will be a slam. But he doesn't want to take any risk by bidding five in case partner has a minimum of 6 points. Consequently he bids three clubs—a one-round force—to find out whether partner can now jump to four spades, in which case he is willing to carry on to five or six.

### Count Required for Slam Tries

Certain opening bids, it has been mentioned, suggest the possibility of a slam—a two-bid, or a two-notrump or three-notrump opening. Where both partners have bid, however, a slam suggestion should be

made at or below game when the minimum total holdings count to around 28-30 points, and the maximum combined holdings may be 33 or more. A slam try at the five-level—beyond game—should be made only where the minimum holdings are 31-32 points. Note: A jump to five in a minor is also a mild slam try, but not so strong as in a major. Such a bid does not involve the risk of loss of the game, and may indicate only 29-30 points. With 33 or more combined points assured, a slam may be bid if, in addition, the player feels certain that the partnership has adequate controls both first- and second-round, and that a satisfactory trump or notrump contract is available. If there is any doubt about the Aces a Blackwood four notrump, if available, is preferable to a direct slam bid. There is no point in taking any unnecessary risk of two adverse Aces.

In slam bidding a player must give as much attention to the *quality* of his values as to the *quantity*. That is why point-count, although usually a good guide to slams, cannot be implicitly relied on in all cases. In slam bidding it should be apparent that one card will prove of great value, whereas another card, counting just as much, will be of little help: Too much strength in opponents' suit, for instance, is likely to be a warning sign, both because it is less likely to help partner, and because opponents are likely to have tricks in other suits where they have not tops in their own. Strength other than the Ace in a suit where partner is likely to have a singleton should be pretty much discounted. Most of these unfavorable situations are due to duplication of values. The slam bidder should be always on the alert to spot this, and should largely discount values subject to this factor.

For instance, consider the following hands:

1. ♠ K Q 7 6 (5)    ♥ K 5 (3)    ♦ Q J 4 2 (3)    ♣ K J 3 (4)
2. ♠ A 10 6 3 (4)    ♥ K 5 (3)    ♦ Q J 4 2 (3)    ♣ A 7 5 (4)

Suppose in each case partner bid a diamond, you bid a spade, and partner bid two hearts. In the first hand three notrump is suggested as the response. This may seem an underbid, as with 15 points in high cards the partnership appears to have at least 33 points. But at least one of the holdings in the black suits is going to be a duplication, as it is likely to be opposite a singleton. Also a Blackwood four notrump is not available. A player must have in his own hand at least one Ace if the suit is diamonds and two if clubs, to use Blackwood. Otherwise the response may put him automatically in an unmakeable slam. Should

partner bid four hearts, five diamonds would be a sufficient response. Partner is known now to have a six-five distribution, and the black King-Queens may easily prove valueless to him.

Now consider Hand 2, which contains 1 point less than Hand 1. With this hand a small slam is bound to be a favorable contract, and a try should be made for a grand. Four diamonds is suggested as the response—a temporary underbid to find out what partner will do next. Should he bid five diamonds, the best bid is six clubs. This is a grand slam invitation. Any cue-bid which forces a slam contract is a grand slam invitation because it is obviously a pointless and unnecessary bid for the purpose of merely reaching a small slam. Should partner bid four hearts, a grand slam in diamonds would be a favorable gamble. Partner has only two black cards, so there are no losers here. To reverse the bidding at the two level he can hardly have less than:

♠ 6 ♥ A Q 5 4 2 ♦ A K 7 6 5 3 ♣ 4

Of course he might have:

♠ K 6 ♥ A Q 5 4 3 ♦ A 10 9 6 5 2 ♣ —

but even here the hand would be no worse than a finesse. Note: The next to the last hand, though a lay-down seven with Hand 2, will not even produce six with Hand 1.

In other words, the holder of Hand 1 will decide that his 9 points in spades and clubs are little use in this particular hand, so instead of assigning to them their usual values will count them as worth about 2 or 3 points, when partner reveals his six-five distribution.

South holds:

♠ 7 5 4 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A J 7 6 5 (7 points revalued) ♣ K Q 2 (5)  
12 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Partner opens one heart.

The bidding:

NORTH	SOUTH
1 ♥	2 ♦
2 ♠	2 NT
3 ♦	?

Partner's distribution is marked as five hearts, four spades, and three diamonds; his bidding strongly indicates a singleton club. Partner's reverse at two spades has shown 18 points minimum, and the diamond

raise should add another point, valued at diamonds, so 19 points can be relied on. This gives 31 points which apparently would indicate an intermediate slam try and an eventual five diamond contract at least. However, on closer inspection it will appear that the King and Queen of clubs are likely to be of very little value, as opposite partner's singleton they result in duplication of values. Consequently, they should be valued at around 2 points instead of 5. This would give only  $19 + 9 = 28$  points—not enough for five diamonds. However, at no-trump the clubs are very valuable, giving a double stop in the suit. Consequently at least 28 points are assured for notrump. Three no-trump, therefore, is obviously the correct bid. However, take the Ace of clubs instead of the King and Queen and an intermediate slam try of four clubs should be made. There is no duplication and if partner's holding is maximum a slam can be made.

It can be seen, therefore, that for slam purposes, *which* high cards are held is just as important as how much they count. High cards which represent certain duplication should simply not be counted for slam purposes, or perhaps a nominal value of a point assigned to them—they may turn out to be of some use after all. Where duplication seems to be a possibility, such cards should be demoted a point.

One of the best ways of bidding slams is simply to count losers. This cannot always be done, but where it can, it is obviously superior to counting points.

North holds:

♠ A 9 x x x x    ♥ A K J x x    ♦ A Q    ♣ —

In this hand, analyzed by one writer, North opened the bidding with one spade, and his partner responded with two spades. A whole page is now spent in explaining how the partnership can now be known to have 33 points. Actually after the raise by partner, point-count (or honor-trick count) can simply be abandoned. North can simply reason that there is likely to be one trump loser but no more; that there will be either no other loser, or at worst a finesse to avoid such a loser. Consequently, it is better than even that only one trick will be lost, and therefore a slam should be bid.

The question of controls is the other factor to which close attention should be given. The Ace, of course, is the all-important card for slams and only rarely loses value—when faced by a void. Second, and also essential, are second-round controls, particularly in suits where

first-round control is absent. This may be represented by either a King or a singleton. A guarded King, of course, is second-round control only half the time, and it is a good idea, if practicable, to arrange the contract so that such a King will be led up to rather than through on the opening lead.

### Examples of Slam Bidding

#### NORTH

♠ Q 6	2 (Full value restored, as partner bid the suit.)
♥ A K J 7 5 4 2	14 (Revalued—6 points for seven-card suit.)
♦ A Q 3	6

22 points, 4 + honor-tricks

#### SOUTH

♠ A J 7 5	5
♥ 8 6 3	1
♦ 7 2	
♣ A 6 4 3	4

10 points, 2 + honor-tricks

The bidding:

#### NORTH

1 ♥  
4 ♥<sup>1</sup>  
6 ♥<sup>2</sup>

#### SOUTH

1 ♠  
5 ♥<sup>2</sup>

1. North, having an independent suit, which he can play opposite a singleton, and 22 points in rebid valuation, jumps to game.

2. South, with 9 points in high cards (2 + honor-tricks) including two controls, three trumps and a doubleton, raises to five. Even where partner has shown he needs little trump support, the trump holding is still important. A point should be deducted for a singleton trump and a point added for three trumps; two trumps is neutral.

3. North has only 22 points (revalued) which is minimum for his bidding; on the other hand he appears to have just the right holding

for a slam. Two first-round controls, one second-round, and an honor in partner's suit. Consequently he bids six. This is a sound slam bid, and chances are better than even. Unless all three trumps are in one hand, winning one of two finesses produces six. With three trumps behind him, winning both finesses will win the hand.

## NORTH

♠ A Q 7 6 2	7
♥ 5	
♦ K Q 4 3	6
♣ K 5 4	3

—

16 points, 3 + honor-tricks

## SOUTH

♠ K 5	3
♥ A J 6	5
♦ A 6 5 2	4
♣ A 6 3 2	4

—

16 points, 3½ + honor-tricks

The bidding:

## NORTH

1 ♠
4 ♦ <sup>1</sup>

## SOUTH

3 NT
6 ♦ <sup>2</sup>

1. The four diamond bid should indicate added values, either in high cards or distribution, and is a mild suggestion of slam possibilities. With an unbalanced hand it is always preferable to explore the possibilities of a suit contract.

2. South's hand gains a point revalued for diamonds—to 17. All his cards are perfect. King and one spade guarantees no spade losers. The only likely loser appears to be a club or a heart.

## NORTH

♠ K Q 10 7 5	7 (revalued)
♥ A	4
♦ A K 4 2	8
♣ K Q 3	5

—

24 points, 5 + honor-tricks

## SOUTH

♠ A 8 6 4	5
♥ K 5 3 2	4
♦ 6 3	
♣ J 7 4	1

---

 10 points, 1½ honor-tricks

The bidding:

## NORTH

 1 ♠  
 3 ♦<sup>1</sup>  
 4 NT<sup>2</sup>  
 6 ♠

## SOUTH

 2 ♠  
 4 ♠<sup>3</sup>  
 5 ♦

1. A one-round force, and—as eventually becomes apparent—a slam try.

2. Accepting what appears to be a game invitation.

3. Blackwood, to make sure three Aces are held.

If South held:

♠ J 7 6 2 ♥ K 5 3 ♦ 8 ♣ J 7 6 4 3

for example, he would sign off with three spades. North could make a further effort by bidding four clubs, which can only be interpreted as interest in a slam. But over four spades North should pass, as making five is not a certainty. Opponents might develop a club ruff.

## NORTH

♥ 8 5 3	1
♦ A 6 3 2	5
♣ A K 10 5 4 3	10

---

 16 points, revalued for hearts

The bidding:

## NORTH

 1 ♣  
 2 ♣

## SOUTH

 1 ♥  
 3 ♥

The opening club bid and rebid are obvious. The hand takes on a much improved appearance when partner jumps to three hearts, showing 15-18 points in rebid valuation. This brings the combined holding to around 31 points. As North has three first-round controls, this indicates a try for a slam.

The spade void is not given extra value with only three trumps. Take a point for three trumps opposite a jump rebid. (Two trumps are neutral; take a point debit for a singleton.)

North, therefore, bids four diamonds. If partner bids four hearts, North bids five hearts.

This may seem like considerable action on a hand so near a minimum. But North's two-club response has limited his strength, consequently the raises to five cannot be misleading. The only probable loser appears to be one heart trick. However, North should not jump to six, as a diamond lead may prevent establishment of the clubs, and make the hand unmanageable.

## SUMMARY

### SLAM BIDDING

#### *I Direct Method*

Count losers. If it is apparent that the combined hands have only one loser, bid the slam without any further count or exploration (see example page 141). If your hand has a possible second loser, you still bid a slam when chances are better than even that your second loser can be turned into a winner.

#### *II Point-Count Method*

In many hands the specific count of losers (direct method) is difficult; the slam then can be reached by combining point values. First check your hand for probable duplication of values (see page 139). Points subject to duplication should be revalued at only a small fraction of their face value.

29-30 points. If your points added to those shown by partner now total 29-30, and partner may have three or four points in reserve above those he has shown; make an intermediate slam try at or below the game level.

31-32\* points. If your combined points total 31-32,\* a bid beyond

---

\* 32 points is borderline values for a slam. If all the cards held seem just the right ones, a slam may be bid with 32 points.



game is justified, inviting partner to bid the slam if he has slight added values. Either a cue-bid or a bid of five should be used. Blackwood should not be used.

33-35 points. If your combined points total 33-35 points, a small slam should be bid if the trump suit has one or no losers, and sufficient first and second round controls are held. When it is merely uncertain whether sufficient Aces are held, the Blackwood four notrump should be employed. When the trump suit is doubtful or when two immediate losers are feared, the decision should be passed to partner by a cue-bid or a bid of five in the agreed-on suit.

36 points and up. Try for or bid a grand slam. Blackwood should be used, if available, to check controls.

## CHAPTER 16

# Overcalls

No point-count system can adequately cover overcalls, because the high-card content of a hand is not nearly so important as its *winners*, or playing tricks. Consider the following case:

With both sides vulnerable, East deals and bids one spade. Suppose that South holds either of these hands:

1. ♠ 7 5 2  
♥ A 6  
♦ A Q 4 3 2  
♣ Q 6 4

2. ♠ 7 5 2  
♥ 4 3  
♦ A Q J 10 5 4  
♣ K 6

Hand 1 is valued at 13 or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks points under the Culbertson Point-Count; Hand 2, at 12 points, or 2 + honor-tricks. Yet, reasonable experience will teach anyone that Hand 1 is a dangerous two-diamond overcall, whereas Hand 2 is a safe overcall.

The difference lies in the number of tricks which the two hands are reasonably sure to win at a diamond contract. With Hand 1, South may win only his two Aces and the Queen of diamonds—a bad diamond break may prevent him from winning any low trumps, and the club Queen is not a solid asset. Even with a fair break, South cannot expect to win more than four or five tricks—three short of his commitment when he overcalls with two diamonds.

With Hand 2, however, South is virtually assured of five diamond tricks and has another good prospect in his club King. Thus, even leaving aside South's "insurance" in his 100 honors in Hand 2, it is obvious that an overcall is far less dangerous with this holding than with Hand 1. And in the final analysis, the criterion of an overcall is its relative danger.

Indeed, it is a serious error to appraise any hand on the same basis for an overcall as for an opening bid. Consider these two South holdings:

3. ♠ A 7 5 4  
 ♥ K 4 3  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ A J 5 6 3

4. ♠ A 7 5  
 ♥ 6 2  
 ♦ 5 4  
 ♣ K Q 10 9 8 6

Hand 3, counting 12 points ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks) in high cards and another point for the fifth club, is a sound one-club opening, but if the bidding is opened at South's right, by East, with a heart or a spade, it is not safe for South to make any call, including a takeout double. A two-club overcall risks a penalty of from three to five tricks; and if South doubles for a takeout, he must expect a response in his singleton suit, diamonds, leaving him with "nowhere to go." Thus, the only sound action with this hand, after an opposing spade or heart bid, is a pass.

Now consider Hand 4. This would not be a sound opening club bid, but it is an acceptable two-club overcall if South is not vulnerable. His club suit alone figures to produce at least four tricks, and his spade Ace is, of course, another winner. So nothing horrible can happen to two clubs.

It will have been seen that the primary consideration in overcalling is the solidity or relative solidity of the trump suit itself. Compare these two suits:

*Example A:*

A Q 6 5 4

*Example B:*

A J 10 9 8

The A-Q suit may take only two tricks if the break is very bad; the other suit must win three tricks, and may easily win four, even against a bad break. So, as the basis of an overcall, Example B is substantially better, although on point-count reckoning alone, Example A has the higher total.

The same criterion applies to six-card and even seven-card suits. Compare:

*Example C:*

♣ A 7 6 5 4 2

*Example D:*

♣ A 10 9 8 7 6

Suppose that South overcalls an opening bid with two clubs in both cases. (Of course he must have something on the side.) He runs into trouble, with the next player holding five clubs. (Naturally, that player doubles.) With Example C, South may not win more than two tricks in clubs; with Example D he is assured of three tricks, and he would

be very unfortunate not to win four tricks. Even a one-trick difference is an important matter when it comes to putting in an overcall.

The Culbertson Rule of 2 and 3 is perhaps the one rule which average players and experts alike observe with almost religious fervor. This rule, applying specifically to overcalls, is stated as follows in the Culbertson *Gold Book*:

When partner has passed or has not yet bid, the maximum expectancy of tricks in his hand should be two winners, if vulnerable, and three winners if not vulnerable. It follows that the bidder, in order to be reasonably safe, must have in his own hand the total of winners required by the contract, less two or, as the case may be, less three. Thus, to overcall an opponent's one-spade bid with two hearts, a player must have at least six winners if vulnerable and five winners if not vulnerable.

The following table shows the number of winners required for overcalls at various levels of bidding.

Bidding Level	Winners Vulnerable	Winners Not Vulnerable
One-odd (not the opening bid) .....	5	4
Two-odd .....	6	5
Three-odd .....	7	6
Four-odd .....	8	7

The obvious exceptions to the Rule of 2 and 3 are :

- a. When the opponents do not know how to double for penalties, or are just naturally over-polite;
- b. When the bidding clearly indicates that partner, even though he passed, holds a fair hand; and
- c. When a sacrifice is advisable to stop a slam.

In many cases it becomes apparent that the opponents are not likely to make game. In such cases the safety margin of expectancy from partner's hand (always assuming he has made no bid) is reduced as follows:

1. If vulnerable, about one winner.
2. If not vulnerable, about two winners.

There is no sense in risking a heavier penalty unless, of course, the player's own hand is so strong as to offer a fair chance for game. However, this does not mean that judicious pushing of opponents should not be indulged in, especially when the bidding overtones make the player feel that the opponents will go on.

## CHAPTER 17

# Takeout Doubles and Responses

The main weapon on which the defenders must rely for the purpose of assuming the offensive is the takeout double.

Any double, made at the first opportunity, of any suit-bid up to and including three-odd, before partner has made a bid, is a takeout double, not a penalty double; that is, the double demands that partner respond by bidding his best suit, and pass only when he believes opponent's contract can be defeated. (Note: A penalty pass by partner counts as a bid.) A takeout double may also be made by the opening bidder, if his partner has not bid.

### *Examples:*

1.	WEST 1 ♠	NORTH Double	EAST	SOUTH
2.	WEST Pass Pass	NORTH 1 ♥ Double	EAST 1 ♠	SOUTH Pass
3.	WEST Pass 1 ♠	NORTH 1 ♣ Double	EAST 1 ♦	SOUTH 1 ♥

In Bidding Sequences 1 and 2, North's doubles are both for takeouts, since South has not yet bid, and since North has doubled at his first opportunity. In Sequence 3, however, North's double is a penalty double, because South has already bid.

The takeout double of a suit-bid of one-odd normally shows about the same minimum strength as an opening bid—13 points. However, as an opponent has already opened the bidding, the *character* of the hand for competitive purposes is of as great or even greater importance

than the high-card strength. The risk in bidding is greatly increased, especially if partner may have to respond at the two-level. Consequently, if the high-card strength is minimum or near minimum, the doubler must be able to support any suit partner is forced to bid. With greater strength (16 points or more) this requirement may be relaxed somewhat; this applies also when the doubler can take refuge in a strong suit of his own.

The ideal hand-pattern for a takeout double is a singleton in opponent's suit and four cards in the others. This will afford strong support for any suit partner may bid. With this type of hand a big set is unlikely, and if any set results, the chances are that the opponents could have scored as much or more at their own contract.

Where several cards are held in opponent's suit, however, the situation is quite the opposite. If partner has to bid a four-card suit, only seven cards may be held in the suit. Furthermore, three tricks will probably be lost immediately in the opponent's suit. This means that it is dangerous to enter the bidding. Also, this type of hand is likely to work out better on the defensive—the opponents are unlikely to score game.

With three or four cards in opponent's suit, about 16 points should be held to enter the bidding.

Another sound type of double is a strong hand with a good suit of one's own, though not particularly good support for other suits. The procedure here is to double and then bid the suit over partner's response. The object of this bid is to show a stronger hand than a mere overcall. Sixteen points are required for this bid; with less, a mere overcall is sufficient.

The requirement for doubling one notrump is 16 points, minimum.

If vulnerable, it might be well to have slightly more than the minimum for adequate protection in all doubles.

### *Examples:*

North, one heart; East holds:

♠ J 7 6 2 (1) ♥ 5 ♦ A Q 4 3 (7) ♣ A 6 5 3 (5)

13 points,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. This is a sound double as there is good support for every suit.

♠ Q 7 3 (2) ♥ 8 ♦ A Q 6 5 3 (7) ♣ A 5 4 2 (5)

14 points, 3 honor-tricks. This is a good double. Although the support for

spades is not too strong, it should be adequate, as a response of only one spade is necessary.

North, one spade; East holds:

♠ 7 5 2   ♥ A K 6   ♦ A K 4   ♣ 7 5 4 3

14 points, 4 honor-tricks. This is a very substantial hand, yet the preferable course of action is to pass. With this distribution a game against an opening bid is rather unlikely, and there is a very fair chance of taking a sizeable set. The opponents are not going to get anywhere, and may possibly get too high. Moreover, it may be possible to enter the bidding later, when the situation is clarified. But, add the Queen of hearts, diamonds or clubs, and a double would be indicated; this would be just too much strength with which to remain quiet.

North, one spade; East holds:

♠ 8 5   ♥ K 10 7 2 (3)   ♦ A Q 5 (6)   ♣ K Q 4 3 (6)

15 points, 3 honor-tricks. This is a sound double with a doubleton spade—somewhat more would be required when holding three spades in the hand.

The reader should note that the takeout double can be a little lighter when partner can respond at the one-level, than when he will be forced to bid two of a suit. Thus, one club may be doubled more lightly than one spade.

When a player doubles for a takeout, the best hope of game is in a major suit. Consequently, the doubler presumably indicates good support for, and four cards in, the other major, if opponent has opened with a major. If opponent opened with a minor, strong support is indicated by the double in at least one major, and more particularly spades.

North, one notrump; East holds:

♠ A Q 6 5 4 (7)   ♥ K J 6 (4)   ♦ A 2 (4)   ♣ Q 6 3 (2)

17 points,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks.

This is a sound double of one notrump. A double of a suit asks partner to take out, but a double of one notrump is a penalty double which partner will take out only if he has a long suit and little strength.

North, one spade; East holds:

♠ 8 6   ♥ A 10 7 5 4 (5)   ♦ A K Q 3 (10)   ♣ 6 2

15 points,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. This is a good hand, and staying out of the bidding is likely to cost a partial, and sometimes even a game. However,

the suits are too weak for an overcall, and there is no preparation for clubs if one doubles. This is a situation often encountered in contract: there is no perfect bid, and so the best choice of evils must be made. Double, and if partner bids clubs, trouble can usually be averted by escaping in diamonds (and, if need be, hearts).

North, one spade; East holds:

♠ A J 6 4 (5)    ♥ 8    ♦ A Q 7 2 (7)    ♣ K J 5 3 (5)

17 points,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Make a trap pass. You cannot stand a heart response from partner.

### Rebid by Doubler

When partner makes a minimum response, the doubler must bear in mind that his partner has been forced to bid, and consequently may have a four-card suit and no honor strength whatever. Although this possibility must be considered, and the bidding so conducted as to avoid a heavy loss in that event, it would be a mistake to rebid on the most pessimistic assumption. It is only rarely that partner holds absolutely nothing, so it should be assumed, for the purpose of continuing the bidding, that partner has some slight values, say around 3 points.

With this in mind, it will be seen that the following schedule of values will come out about right:

To raise partner's suit to the four-level, you need 22 or 23 points, and of course four trumps with at least two honors.

To bid three notrump, you need 24 points, with usually two stoppers in opponent's suit.

To raise partner's suit to the three-level requires 19 points in support, and to bid two notrump 20 points, with two stoppers in opponent's suit.

To bid two notrump over partner's forced response of two is a very strong bid—close to an opening two-notrump bid. With less than 20 points, the proper course is an immediate overcall of one notrump, not a double.

To make a jump bid in another suit (after having doubled for a take-out) requires about 22 points, revalued.

A single raise for partner requires about 16 points.

All requirements, it will be seen, are about 3 points higher than where partner has responded to your opening bid.

Where partner responds with two clubs, or one in the lowest ranking



suit possible, particular caution should be exercised in raising, as partner may have been forced to respond on a three-card suit.

*Examples:*

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♡	Double	Pass	1 ♠
Pass			

East holds:

♠ Q J 7 2 (4) ♡ 6 ♦ A Q 5 4 (7) ♣ A 6 5 3 (5)  
16 points, 3 + honor-tricks. Bid two spades. Partner, with 9 or 10 points, should carry on.

Same bidding; East holds:

♠ Q J 7 5 (4) ♡ 8 ♦ A Q 6 2 (7) ♣ A K 5 4 (8)  
19 points, 4 + honor-tricks. Bid three spades.

Same bidding; East holds:

♠ K Q 3 2 (6) ♡ 7 ♦ A Q J 5 (8) ♣ A K 5 4 (8)  
22 points, 5 honor-tricks. Bid four spades.

Same bidding; East holds:

♠ A Q 5 (6) ♡ K J 7 (4) ♦ A K J 6 (8) ♣ A Q 7 (6)  
24 points, 6 honor-tricks. Bid three notrump.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♡	Double	Pass	2 ♣
Pass			

East holds:

♠ A Q 6 5 (6) ♡ A J 10 (5) ♦ K Q 7 (5) ♣ A 6 2 (4)  
20 points, 4½ + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump.

Same bidding; East holds:

♠ A J 4 3 (5) ♡ A J 10 (5) ♦ K 6 2 (3) ♣ A 7 6 (4)  
17 points, 4 honor-tricks. Bid one notrump over one heart.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♡	Double	Pass	2 ♣
Pass			

East holds:

♠ K Q J 7 5 2 (11) ♡ 4 ♦ K J 10 (4) ♣ A Q 7 (6)

21 points. Note the 2 points for six-card suit plus 1 point more on revaluation, (your suit is strong enough to revalue as though partner had supported you) adequate for a jump rebid. Bid three spades. This bid is not forcing but is strongly inviting; partner, with 4 points in support, will carry on.

## Reopening the Bidding

When your left-hand opponent opened the bidding and the next two players passed, the situation is very much altered. Here one opponent has shown abject weakness, and there is a presumption that partner has a fair amount of strength. Consequently, a takeout double to reopen the bidding is justified on considerably less strength than is required under normal conditions.

Of course, it is possible that the opponents have miscalculated. The opener may have a big hand and his partner may have passed with moderate values; so there is no sense reopening on a shoestring. With a considerable part of your strength in opponent's suit, it is usually wiser to pass. Partner's strength in this case is limited; because of your strength in the enemy's suit *he* can't have much in that suit, and so can't have made a trap pass. A reopening risks that the opponents may find a better spot, or that your side has no good contract.

With a singleton in the opponent's suit, however, the possibility of a trap pass by partner should be carefully considered, and a reopening takeout double made on fairly light holdings.

A quite satisfactory count for reopening is 11 points, and if a trap pass by partner seems probable, this may be shaded to 10 or even 9 points.

## Responses to Takeout Doubles

The average player tends to undervalue his hand in responding to the takeout double. He does not seem to realize that when he makes a minimum response in a suit, he has actually made no bid at all, as far as showing any strength goes. What a player should consider is how much strength his partner will play him for. As just stated, partner will not play him for zero values—a blank hand—although it is possible that he may hold one. His partner will play him for about 3 points. Consequently, anything he holds in excess of 3 points is added value, of which partner has no inkling until it is shown to him in the bidding.

Accordingly, with as much as 5 points, and certainly with 6, responder has something to show. Obviously this will not be enough for game if partner has a minimum or near-minimum double, but if partner makes a jump rebid, responder, with 6 points and often with 5, should be delighted to respond further.

It may appear that in some sequences this will leave the partnership a point or two short of the required 26. Actually this is not so, for 1 or 2 points are usually made up by the enhancement of partner's holdings, due to the fact that he is over the opening bidder—as long as responder is able to enter his own hand once or twice.

Accordingly, with 5 or 6 points, rebid if partner makes a strong bid.

### *Examples:*

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♥	Double	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	?

You, West, hold:

♠ Q 7 6 5 2 (4) ♥ 5 4 3 2 ♦ 8 ♣ Q 5 4 (2)

6 points,  $\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick; 4 points for two Queens, 1 for the five-card trump suit, and 1 more on revaluation.

Bid four spades. Remember, you would have bid one spade on the following hand (possibly even less):

♠ Q 7 6 3 (2) ♥ 5 4 3 2 ♦ 8 6 ♣ J 5 3 (1)

3 points. This is what partner has a right to expect—quite different from the hand you hold.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♠	Double	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 NT	Pass	?

You, West, hold:

♠ 7 6 5 ♥ Q 5 4 (2) ♦ K 10 6 3 (3) ♣ 5 4 2

5 points,  $\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick. Bid three notrump. Partner is close to an opening two-notrump bid. (Note: with a bad partner, pass—he won't have the proper values!)

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♥	Double	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	?

You, West, hold:

♠ J 6 (1) ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 6 5 4 2 ♣ K J 7 3 (4)

5 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-trick. Bid four spades. If you had the Jack of diamonds instead of the Jack of spades, a pass would likely be preferable.

No matter how weak your hand is, you must make a bid when partner doubles; in fact the weaker your hand, the greater the obligation to take out his double. Your partner has accepted full responsibility for any loss incurred by your bidding, but the severe loss which will result from passing will be entirely your fault. A pass should be considered only when you have a strong and long holding in the opponent's suit, so that you can well expect to take several tricks defensively, but cannot hope for many tricks at a contract of your own.

With a hand containing from 8 to 10 points, make a minimum response, but make a further move toward game if partner makes *any* rebid.

*Examples:*

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Double	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	?

You, West, hold:

♠ Q J 7 4 3 (5) ♥ 8 ♦ J 6 5 2 (1) ♣ K 6 2 (3)

9 points, 1 + honor-tricks. (2 points for a five-card suit, supported by partner.) Bid three spades. Partner with only 16 points will pass; with more he will go on to game.

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Double	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	?

You, West, hold:

♠ 7 4 ♥ Q 6 3 (1) ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ A J 7 5 2 (7)

8 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  honor-tricks. Bid three hearts. In raising partner when the auction has been along these lines, 6 or 7 points are sufficient. A raise should be given with any hand which would qualify as a single raise if partner *opened* the bidding. Partner shows a minimum of 16 points; holding only that minimum, he will pass three hearts. But remember that this 16 points represents original valuation and may become 17 or 19 points on revaluation, when you are able to support his suit.

North, one diamond; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ Q J 6 4 (3)    ♥ A J 5 3 (6)    ♦ 7 6 2    ♣ 4 3

9 points,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  + honor-tricks. Bid one spade, and on the next round bid hearts. This is a good hand opposite a double, and worth two constructive bids.

Hands with 11-13 points are in the jump-response range. A single jump will tell partner that a game is in prospect if his double is slightly more than a minimum, or possibly even with a minimum if there is an exceptionally good fit. This bid is not forcing, and does not show anything like the strength which would ordinarily be ascribed to jump bids in other situations. As partner cannot assume that you have more than 3 points on a minimum response, when 11 points are held, it is essential to tell him that he should keep the bidding going. The only absolute force is to cue-bid opponent's suit. However, it is also possible to jump to game when the correct contract is clearly indicated.

Examples. North, one heart; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ A Q 7 6 3 (7)    ♥ 5 4 2    ♦ K J 6 (4)    ♣ 5 3

11 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two spades.

North, one spade; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ 7 5    ♥ Q 4 3 (2)    ♦ A Q J 7 6 2 (9)    ♣ 5 4

11 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid three diamonds.

With 14 points or more, bid a game in a suit or notrump; or cue-bid opponent's suit if the proper game contract is in doubt.

### Responses in Notrump

With one or more stoppers in opponent's suit, it is often advisable to respond with notrump. This is always a strength-showing bid and should never be used merely because responder's only length is in opponent's suit.

To respond with one notrump, a player should have about 7 points with two probable stoppers in opponents' suit, or eight points with one stopper (sometimes only a partial stopper, such as J x x). A fair four-card major suit should usually be preferred to one notrump, but one notrump should be preferred to a short minor-suit response.

For example, North, one heart; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ 8 6    ♥ Q J 9 5 (3)    ♦ A 4 3 (4)    ♣ 7 5 4 2

7 points, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid one notrump.

♠ 7 5    ♥ Q 9 4 3    ♦ A 5 4    ♣ Q 7 6 5

8 points, 1½ honor-tricks. Bid one notrump.

♠ Q 10 7 6 (2)    ♥ K J 5 (4)    ♦ Q 6 4 3 (3)    ♣ 8 5

9 points, 1 + honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

With 12 or 13 points and a sure stopper in opponent's suit, respond with two notrump.

For example, North, one diamond; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ 7 5 3    ♥ K Q 4 (5)    ♦ Q J 10 6 (3)    ♣ K J 7 (4)

12 points, 2 + honor-tricks. Bid two notrump; this bid, though very encouraging, is not forcing.

### The Penalty Pass

Passing partner's takeout double is justifiable only with a strong trump holding. With five trumps, they should be so strong that a trump lead from partner would be welcome. The leave-in of a double of one in a suit suggests that partner *should* open a trump. With almost any six trumps, a leave-in is likely to be best, unless in addition there is some strength in another suit.

As a leave-in is always a possibility (though the doubler himself rarely hopes for that outcome) the doubler should be prepared for this eventuality. Consequently, it is best to avoid doubling, as far as possible, with a void in the opponent's suit. Some such hands offer no satisfactory alternative to doubling, but where some other bid is reasonably satisfactory, it should be chosen.

Examples. North, one heart; East, double; South, pass; West holds:

♠ 7 5    ♥ Q J 10 9 6    ♦ K 4    ♣ Q 5 3 2

Pass. One heart doubled will probably be as profitable to East-West as any other contract, but with a small diamond instead of the King, bid two clubs.

Same bidding; West holds:

♠ 8    ♥ A 10 7 5 4 3    ♦ J 6 4    ♣ 5 4 3

Pass. One heart may be made, but no East-West contract is likely to be preferable.

## When Opponent Intervenes

Consider this sequence:

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♡	Double	Redouble	?

If opener's partner redoubles, and responder (West, here) has a bad hand, his main concern should be to get his side out of the trap at the cheapest contract possible. Consequently, a bid over the redouble does not necessarily show strength. This is particularly true if the bid is made in the lowest-ranking escape suit possible. However, a bid in this situation does tend to show a five-card suit, or at least a strong four-card suit.

Examples. North, one spade; East, double; South, redouble; West holds:

♠ 7 4 3 2   ♡ 5   ♦ 7 6 2   ♣ Q 10 5 4 3

Bid two clubs. This tells partner that this will be the best "out" if he has three or more clubs; and the bid protects partner if his suit is hearts.

Same bidding; West holds:

♠ 7 5   ♡ J 7 6 4 2   ♦ 5 4 3   ♣ 6 5 3

Pass. Partner may get out in clubs or diamonds. The heart suit can always be bid later, if it seems desirable.

If a *good* hand is held—10 points or more—it is therefore necessary to jump one trick to inform partner of this strength.

When the second opponent bids, any bid by the doubler's partner shows some strength—about 8 points with a fairly good suit.

For example, North, one club; East, double; South, one heart; West holds:

♠ A 7 6 5 3 (5)   ♡ 6 4 2   ♦ Q J 7 (3)   ♣ 5 3

8 points, 1 + honor-tricks. Bid one spade.

♠ 6 5   ♡ 4 3 2   ♦ A K 7 5 2 (8)   ♣ 6 5 4

8 points, 2 honor-tricks. Bid two diamonds.

## Overcall in Opponent's Suit

(A cue-bid)

This bid is in effect a gigantic takeout double, and indicates that a game can be scored with only slight distributional support from partner. It is usually made on a hand with a void or singleton in opponent's

suit and powerful support for any suit partner may bid; but it may also be used with a powerful two-suiter, or a one-suited hand with nine sure tricks in a major suit. About 22 points are usually necessary for this bid. With a void in opponent's suit or a strong two-suiter, the requirements may be shaded as low as 20 points.

For example, North, one heart; East, two hearts. East holds:

♠ A Q J 6 (7)    ♥ 5    ♦ A K 4 3 (8)    ♣ K Q J 6 (7)

22 points, 5 + honor-tricks.

♠ A Q 6 5 3 (7)    ♥ —    ♦ A K J 7 4 (10)    ♣ A 5 3 (4)

21 points, 5 + honor-tricks.

♠ A K Q J 6 3 (12)    ♥ 5 4    ♦ A 7 (4)    ♣ K Q J (6)

22 points, 5 + honor-tricks.

The cue-bid in opponents' suit is usually carried to game, but may be dropped short of game if the responding hand is hopelessly weak. But the cue-bidder may *force* to game by a jump bid or a second cue-bid at his next turn.

## SUMMARY

### TAKEOUT DOUBLES

A double of a suit-bid is to be interpreted as a takeout double if:

1. Partner has not previously taken any action (bid, double, re-double).
  2. It is made at doubler's first opportunity.
  3. The doubled bid is one, two, or three of a suit.
- I. The takeout double is used most often immediately following opponent's opening bid. The requirements in that case are:
1. A hand with as many points (in the proper type of valuation) as an opening bid—13 or more points.
  2. Support for all unbid suits or a strong rebiddable suit. When support for all unbid suits is held, the hand should be valued as though it is a dummy for partner. When the hand contains a rebiddable suit, it should be valued as declarer's hand, as to points, and as an overcaller's as to winners.
  3. Regardless of the method of point valuation, a minimum of 10 points in high cards is necessary.
- A double of a one-notrump bid is always a (co-operative) penalty double. A double of a higher notrump bid is strictly for penalties.



II. The takeout double may be used as a rebid by opener. For example, after opening, an opponent overcalled and your partner passed. On your next turn you double *for a takeout*. The requirements are:

1. Support in the unbid suits.
2. A minimum of 16 points. After *both* opponents have bid, the requirements are the same as in I, except that 2 more points are needed.

In all takeout doubles the probable level of partner's reply must be considered. Whenever the bidding is such that he must reply at the two-level or higher, the minimum point requirements must be stiffened by about 2 points or more. Whenever partner's likely response is at the one-level, the given point requirements are adequate, and may even occasionally be shaded a point or two.

When you are vulnerable, you should never shade your takeout doubles, and should usually have a little over the minimum.

#### RESPONDING TO TAKEOUT DOUBLES

If partner doubles an opponent's suit bid for a takeout and the next opponent passes:

Do not pass, unless you have length (usually at least five cards, occasionally four), and strength (usually three sure winners, occasionally two) in opponent's suit.

Do not pass, even with required holding in opponents' suit, when your hand is strong enough to produce an almost sure game; except when a penalty pass definitely promises to result in a bigger profit for your side.

**BID:** Your longest suit at the lowest possible level (0-11 points).

Jump in your longest suit, or in notrump (11 or more points).

Bid one notrump (7-10 points).

When bidding notrump, the opponent's suit should be stopped.

If there is a choice between suit-bids, or between a suit-bid and a notrump bid, favor the major suit.

If your right-hand opponent makes a bid over your partner's double, pass with less than 6 points. With 6 or 7 points, bid a conditionally biddable suit if you can do it at the one-level. With more than 7 points, proceed as though opponent had not bid.

If your right-hand opponent redoubles, proceed the same way as though he had made a bid, except that if partner's rescue bid is apt to turn out disastrously, bid a five-card suit of your own with as little as 4 points.

## CHAPTER 18

# Penalty Doubles

### A New Point-Count Rule for Penalty Doubles\*

Heretofore all point-count methods were sadly inadequate in the most important field of contract bridge—the strategy and tactics of penalty doubles. They either evaded the issue or naively assumed that the requirement of two “quick” tricks for opening bids would solve the problem of penalty doubles. A player’s game when based on such assumptions is like a man with a lame leg.

The new point-count rule for penalty doubles given below is a decisive step toward the solution of the problem. While it is true that no point-count method could be devised to supersede the honor-trick method in the handling of penalty doubles, this new rule approaches the precision (but not the flexibility) of the honor-trick method and will be of benefit not only to average players but to advanced players and even experts as well.

Against opponent’s contracts, the most important consideration is the length and strength in their trump suit. Queens and Jacks, furthermore, lose much of their value against opponents’ suit-bids.

The following formula, involving a slight modification of the point-count, takes these two issues into consideration and affords an accurate guide in penalty doubles:

A . . . . .	4 points
K . . . . .	3 points
Q . . . . .	1 point
Four cards in opponent’s suit . . . . .	1 point
Five cards in opponent’s suit . . . . .	2 points
Each sure trick in trumps . . . . .	3 points
A probable trick in trumps . . . . .	2 points

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\* The principal credit for this excellent rule is due to my associate, Theodore A. Lightner, who is not only one of the four or five best players in the world but also one of the greatest theorists of the game.

**A possible trick in trumps . . . . . 1 point**

**Four cards in partner's suit—deduct 2 points**

**Count trump length in addition to tricks in trumps.**

**Count high cards in trumps, either by above count or as trick winners, whichever is higher. Thus, Ace of trumps is 4 points.**

If your partner opened with one in a suit, or made a takeout double, credit him with 10 points. If he opened with one notrump, credit him with 13 points. If he merely overcalled or responded to your opening, credit him with 6 points. Add the total of your points to partner's. Twenty points in all is a sound double of a contract of three, or of a contract of two clubs or two diamonds (a "free" double, as it doesn't risk game). Twenty-three points is a good double of any contract of one, or a contract of two hearts or two spades. The latter are "tight" doubles, as the loss is a severe one if the contract is fulfilled—the opponents score a game.

The value of a side suit Queen is reduced to 1 point and the Jack is disregarded, because these cards cannot be counted on as probable winners against opponents' suit-bids. Tricks in trumps, however, are sure winners and are valued accordingly; mere length in the trump suit is of considerable value, and points are assigned for this.

A "sure" trick in trumps is one which is almost certain to make. A probable trick is one which will make well over half the time. A possible trick is one which will make some of the time.

For example, K x x behind the bid may be counted 3 points, although it is not absolutely certain—the Ace may turn up in the dummy.

Q x x behind the bid counts 2 points—a probable trick. For J x x, count 1 point—a possible trick. It will make on an over-ruff, or if partner has the Queen or King.

With K 10 x x, the 10 is a probable trick. Count it as 2 points. With K 9 x x, the 9 is a possible trick. It will make on an over-ruff, or if partner has the ten or Jack. So count the nine for 1 point.

Regardless of the count, a penalty double should not ordinarily be made on less than three trumps (including a probable trick) at the two- or three-level. At the one-level, at least four strong trumps should be held, and usually such a double should have five trumps.

Four cards in partner's suit is a disadvantageous holding for a penalty double, especially at the one- or two-level. A 2-point deduction is in order, and such a double is usually inadvisable in any case where four *strong* cards of partner's suit are held.

The count will indicate clearly whether a player has the values to set an opponent's bid. However, it does not follow that a double is always the proper call merely because the count indicates that opponent's bid can be set. There are two situations where the double should not be employed.

First: The probable return from the double should be compared to the profit which can be expected if the hand is played at your own best bid. If the latter profit is the greater, it is, of course, better to bid than to double. As an obvious example, it would be very foolish to double an opponent's non-vulnerable overcall if a slam of your own were in prospect. Even a vulnerable game should be preferred to a penalty unless a 500 penalty is certain, with a chance for 700.

Second: In doubling, as in other phases of bidding, it is essential to look forward to what may develop in later rounds of bidding. Thus, it is not enough merely to be sure of setting the present contract, because a double of one suit suggests to partner that a double of a new suit would be welcome. A proper double, therefore, should have about 6 points in high cards as part of the count. Otherwise, the hand is so weak in high-card strength that any positive action is inadvisable. The opponents are likely to have the better hand, and may arrive at a makeable contract which partner may be induced to double.

For example, you hold:

♠ 7    ♥ QJ 10 9 5 2    ♦ J 4 3    ♣ 6 4 3

Partner bids a spade and the next opponent overcalls with two hearts. Four trump tricks count 12, plus 2 for length: 14 points. This, added to partner's 10 points, totals 24—enough to beat the contract. However, to double would be folly, as the hand is no good for anything except hearts. Pass, and see how the bidding develops. There is still a possibility of playing two hearts doubled. If the next opponent passes, partner may be strong enough to double for a takeout, and then you will of course pass for a penalty.

Or suppose you hold:

♠ 7 2    ♥ QJ 10 6 4    ♦ K 5 4    ♣ 6 5 3

One spade by partner, two hearts by the next hand. This hand counts 14—9 for three trump tricks, 2 for the five-card length, and 3 for the King. However, due to high-card weakness, a pass is still the best decision. Take the Ace of diamonds instead of the King, and you have a sound double.

### Examples of Penalty Doubles

South, one spade; West, two hearts. North holds:

♠ A 7    ♥ Q 10 5 3    ♦ K 6 5    ♣ 7 5 4 2

13 points. This is a minimum "tight" double—23 points in all. The 6 points in hearts is arrived at as follows: Four cards in trumps, 1 point; the Queen is a trick with three guards, 3 points; and the ten is a probable second trick, 2 points.

South, one spade; West, two diamonds. North holds:

♠ A 7    ♥ Q 6 3 2    ♦ Q 9 5 4    ♣ 7 5 4

10 points. This is a fair "light" or "free" double. Opponents may make their contract but the loss won't be much.

Or take this bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	Pass	?	

North holds:

♠ K 5 2    ♥ J 9 7 6    ♦ K 10 4 2    ♣ 5 3

10 points. North should double two hearts. Partner must have at least two hearts to an honor, so the Jack is worth a trick—it cannot be picked up—3 points. 1 point for the four trumps. Partner has 13 points. This makes 23 points. (The North hand was slightly too weak for a raise to two notrump—7 points.)

Another example. The bidding goes:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	2 ♣	Double	Pass
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	Pass
?			

South holds:

♠ 10 6 4 2    ♥ A Q 5    ♦ A K 7 6    ♣ 4 3

South has 13 doubling points against spades.

North has 10 points, but of course only against clubs. However, he has indicated preparedness to help against other contracts and his club tricks should develop at spades, due to South's shortness in clubs. South should double. The four-card spade length and the shortness in clubs are the keys to the hand.

## Procedure by Doubler's Partner

When partner doubles an opposing contract of one or two, it is important for the opening bidder to consider carefully whether or not he should permit the double to stand. Partner's double should not be regarded as sacred, to be left in under all circumstances; on the contrary, the opener should consider what action *his* hand calls for.

By far the most important factor in this decision is the number of trumps held. Two trumps may be considered as normal. This is a satisfactory holding, and usually the double should not be "disturbed." The only exceptions are: (a) a two-suited hand, without many top cards, or of course even more freakish distributions, or (b) a six-card or longer suit, with most of the strength concentrated in that suit. With three trumps the double should be left in irrespective of the rest of the hand. A singleton or void is unfavorable for the double. This is a point not understood by many players. They reason that it *is* favorable, because partner will have that many more trumps. Actually, the proper reasoning is that dummy will have that many more, and hence will afford declarer considerable support. It can easily be seen that the odds favor this, because the 5-4-3-1 distribution of a suit is much more frequent than the 5-5-2-1. Even if partner has five or six trumps, the set may not be so severe as might be expected. After declarer has been ruffed a few times, the doubler is likely to find himself end-played in trumps. It is true, of course, that where partner holds some solid holding in trumps, such as Q J 10 x x or K Q J 10 x, it will prove a mistake to have taken out the double. However, a loss must be accepted in these rare cases so as to get good results on the average and to let partner double safely with less powerful holdings.

The disadvantage of a void in trumps is so great that the opener should start with the idea that of course he is going to take the double out, but first he will stop and consider whether his hand has sufficient *favorable* features to make him change his mind. If his values consist of top cards, i.e., A K's or A Q's, and will probably produce four tricks, it will be safe to let the double stand.

From a point-count view, the opener knows that partner is depending on him for 10 doubling points (A = 4, K = 3, Q = 1). Consequently, opener should evaluate his hand on this basis and deduct 4 points for a void in trumps, or 2 points for a singleton. (For three

trumps he may take a 2-point credit.) If his total drops below 8 points, the hand is unsuitable for the double.

South holds:

♠ A 10 7 6 2   ♥ —   ♦ A K 5 4   ♣ A 5 4 3

The bidding goes: South, one spade; West, two hearts; North, double; East, pass. South has 15 doubling points, less 4 for the void, leaving 11—a satisfactory margin. The double may be left in.

Or South may have:

♠ K Q J 7 2   ♥ —   ♦ A 5 4 3   ♣ Q J 6 4

The bidding is the same. Now South has 9 doubling points, less 4 for the void, leaving only 5—much too little support for partner. South should bid two spades. Give South the Queen of diamonds in place of a small one, and three diamonds would be the proper bid. The added Queen would only provide 1 more doubling point, and 6 points would still be inadequate support for the double.

A singleton trump is also an undesirable holding, but not so bad as a void. With a six-card suit, or a two-suited hand or more freakish distribution, a takeout is indicated. However, with normal distribution (5-4-3-1 or 4-4-4-1) the double may be left in if the strength is mainly in top cards. If the hand has 9 doubling points after deducting 2 for the singleton, a leave-in is all right.

South holds:

♠ A J 5 4 3   ♥ 8   ♦ A K 2   ♣ J 7 6 4

The bidding goes: South, one spade; West, two hearts; North, double; East, pass. South has 11 points, less 2 for the singleton = 9. He cannot feel enthusiastic about the double. But his 9 points (three top tricks) should be sufficient to beat the contract. South has no better place to go.

On the same bidding South holds:

♠ K Q 10 6 4   ♥ 2   ♦ A 7 5 3   ♣ Q J 4

South has 9 doubling points (A = 4, K = 3, two Q's = 2, total = 9, less two for the singleton = 7). This is inadequate support for partner. South should bid two spades. Even though this bid may not suit partner, it is better than risking the two-heart double.

Where the doubled contract is two hearts or a higher contract (a tight, not a free double), it may be left in with slightly less support,

as partner guarantees greater strength than for a free double (two clubs or diamonds or any bid of one).

Where partner has doubled a contract of three, it should only be taken out when the hand is highly unsuitable, and a reasonably safe landing spot is assured.

### Doubles of Contracts of Four or More

When the contract is four or higher, it is obviously much easier to decide what tricks you are likely to take than to count points.

Doubles of such contracts are not "free" doubles; on the contrary, they may turn out to be very expensive if redoubled. Consequently it is best to follow the Culbertson rule for such doubles: there should be a probability of setting the contract two tricks. The odds in scoring are so much against the doubler that the risk should not be taken for a mere 50 or 100 points. Furthermore, a double should not be ventured if it might help declarer make his contract. Of course, a double for a one-trick set is all right if virtually certain tricks are held—for instance:

♠ K Q J   ♥ A 5 4 3   ♦ A 2   ♣ 7 5 4 3

This is obviously a sound double of four spades. But change the trump holding to K Q x; this would be an unsound double, even in back of the bidder, if his partner had raised. The Ace might easily turn up in dummy!

When the bidding has been competitive, a player should always try to decide which side is defending; or to put it differently, which side has the better hand. Sometimes the strength may appear quite evenly distributed, but usually one side or the other will apparently hold a definite preponderance of strength. When the opponents have the better hand, double only with a practically certain set. The opponents may, perhaps, have misjudged the situation, but they expect to fulfil their contract, and a redouble is not improbable. Where your side appears to have the better hand, double more boldly. The opponents are pushing you, and should not be allowed to do so at little or no cost.

When the opponents have done all the bidding, many good players are sometimes inclined to make somewhat speculative doubles. No "guarantees" ever go with this type of double, but players who wish to indulge in it (with less strength than indicated by the Culbertson rule) should listen carefully to the opponents' bidding. If their bidding has



been strong and positive, a double is very risky except with sure setting tricks. If their bidding has been uncertain and halting, a severe loss from a redouble is unlikely (though not impossible).

Contrast these bidding sequences by opponents:

1. SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♠	2 ♦
2 NT	3 NT

Here the bidding is minimum throughout, consequently not necessarily strong. South might have a shaded rebid of two notrump, and North might have pushed on with only a fair response. A double of this bidding, however, would be very dangerous, for it is equally probable that South was just short of a three-notrump rebid, and that North had a fine hand, though not enough to try for a slam.

2. SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♠	2 ♦
2 ♠	3 NT

Here, obviously, the bidding is strong: a double would simply court a redouble.

3. SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 ♠
2 ♦	2 ♠
2 NT	3 NT

Here it is apparent the opponents do not have surplus values. South was only strong enough to rebid two diamonds, denying ability to bid three diamonds or two notrump. North was only able to rebid two spades over two diamonds; this is not a strong rebid and indicates decidedly limited values. Although opponents may make three notrump, it is unlikely that they can redouble, and more unlikely that they can make overtricks.

4. SOUTH	NORTH
1 ♦	1 ♠
1 NT	2 ♠
2 NT	3 NT

In this situation the opponents may be pressing, and probably do not have surplus values.

## Procedure of Doubler's Partner

At a contract of four or five, a singleton or void in trumps should not be regarded as a liability.

At this level, doubles should be taken out only when the higher contract can almost certainly be made, and the probable penalty will not be enough to compensate; or when it seems likely opponents will fulfil their contract and the probable set at the higher contract will be only one trick, or possibly two, not vulnerable.

## SUMMARY

### PENALTY DOUBLES

Ace = 4 points

King = 3 points

Queen = 1 point

Four cards in opponents' suit.....1 point

Five cards in opponents' suit.....2 points

Each sure trick in trumps.....3 points

A probable trick in trumps.....2 points

A possible trick in trumps.....1 point

Four cards in partner's suit—deduct..2 points

Count trump length in addition to tricks in trumps.

Count high cards in trumps, either by above count or as trick winners, whichever is higher. Thus, Ace of trumps is 4 points.

If your partner opened with one in a suit, or made a takeout double, credit him with 10 points. If he opened with one notrump, credit him with 13 points. If he merely overcalled or responded to your opening bid, credit him with 6 points. Add the total of your points to partner's.

With 20 points you have a sound double of a contract of three, or of a contract of two clubs or two diamonds.

With 23 points you have a good double of any contract of one, or a contract of two hearts or two spades.









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